

Reshaping the U.S. cattle industry: Producers and packers, 1914–1933

by

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B.A., Colorado State University, 2006

M.A., Kansas State University, 2014

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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## **Abstract**

In 1914 the stockmen of the American West launched what they referred to as the “war on the packers.” Desiring more than rhetoric, stockmen donated their own money to finance a producer-led investigation of the big meat packer’s economic power. That investigation ultimately led to a Federal Trade Commission bombshell report that indicted the packers for attempting to control the global food supply, served them a crippling consent decree, and ended with the Packers and Stockyards Act in 1921. Perennial conflict is historians’ standard narrative of the relationship between producers and packers. However, from 1922 to 1933, producers such as John Kendrick, Dan Casement, and O. M. Plummer, cooperated with Thomas E. Wilson and other big packers along associational lines and looked to packers for industry leadership. Although contemporary producers and packers applauded their newfound cooperative attitudes, producers never fully trusted the packers, making this a tenuous cooperation. The political philosophy of associationalism helped legitimize big packer leadership of the industry. Producers’ acceptance of packer leadership is evident in their shared effort to reform the practices of meat retailers, how producers generally supported packer policies, and how they worked through the Federal Farm Board to eliminate middlemen. The packers also created a campaign for increased consumer consumption of meat and cast vegetarians as their common enemy as a way of unifying the livestock industry. The big packers and the National Live Stock and Meat Board used their power in subtle and often hidden ways to get producers to raise smaller cattle and get consumers to purchase more meat and to prepare it in certain ways. The producers largely accepted the packers demand for smaller cattle. Finally, the Meat Board relied on several consumer-based networks established by home economists, but these women were employees—not actual members of the board. While board members respected the home economist’s ability and advice, institutionally

they were junior partners of sorts in the industry collective known as the Meat Board. As employees, home economists of the board were not expected to defend housewives' consumer choices, but to shape those choices. The Meat Board's home economics department members attempted to shape consumer thought by manipulating as many channels to the consumer as possible, from schools to women's magazines. On the eve of the New Deal then, many big producers stood ready to follow packer leadership.

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Major Professor  
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## **Dedication**

For Gayle.

## **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

In early January 1922, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, at the annual convention of the American National Live Stock Association (ANLSA), E. L. Burke, second vice president of the ANLSA, told his fellow stockmen as well as the packers in the audience that “the time has come to cooperate.” For the last six years, Burke had led the ANLSA on behalf of all producers in a war against the packers for their ill-treatment of stockmen. Now, with regulations in place, he believed that producers and packers were “on the verge of an era of good feeling.” He said this as a preface to his announcement of the organization of a new association that would embody this cooperative spirit, the National Live Stock and Meat Board. Burke was not alone; producers of the ANLSA were eager and willing to work with the big meat packers in the early 1920s.<sup>1</sup>

In 1914 the livestock raisers of the American West launched what they referred to as the “war on the packers.” Wanting more than mere rhetoric, producers donated their own money to fund a producer-led investigation of the big meat packer’s economic power that ultimately led to a Federal Trade Commission bombshell report that indicted the packers for attempting to control the global food supply, served them a crippling consent decree, and ended with the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921. Perennial conflict is historians’ standard narrative of the relationship between producers and packers.<sup>2</sup> However, from 1922 to 1933, producers such as John Kendrick, Dan Casement, and O. M. Plummer, cooperated with Thomas E. Wilson and other big packers along associational lines and looked to packers for industry leadership. Associationalism called for cooperation among businesses through trade associations and between business and government in order to increase efficiency and stabilize the economy.<sup>3</sup> Although contemporary producers and packers applauded their new found cooperative attitudes, producers never fully trusted the packers, making this a tenuous cooperation. The political philosophy of

associationalism helped legitimize big packer leadership of the industry. Producers' acceptance of packer leadership is evident in their shared attempts to reform the practices of meat retailers, how many producers supported packer policies, and how they worked through the Federal Farm Board to eliminate middlemen. The big packers were adversaries in the sense that their economic interest was contrary to the producers. The packers wanted to purchase cattle for the lowest price possible and cattlemen wanted to sell for the highest price possible. At the same time, the producers and packers depended on each other for their livelihood. The market power of the big packers gave them the ability to exploit the producers. Because of the unequal power distribution, the cattlemen never fully trusted the packers. Leading producers encouraged and supported the packers in making the livestock and meat industry more efficient and in promoting meat consumption. Producers in general accepted packer leadership of the livestock industry, ultimately giving packers the upper hand.

Why would the producers—the apparent enemies of the packers—want to collaborate with them? A review of the literature on the livestock and meat industry is largely silent on the cooperation or collaboration between producers and packers. The reason, perhaps, is that most studies explore one group or the other and none have fully considered the interaction between producers and packers. John T. Schlebecker took a producer's perspective in *Cattle Raising on the Plains* and painted the packers as an enemy of the producers. He told of how the packers “irritated” the cattlemen and that the producers wanted to “control” the packers in the early 1920s and then in the 1930s looked to meat packers as “culprits” during the early depression.<sup>4</sup> Charles Wood in his study, the *Kansas Beef Industry*, took a more nuanced view. He noted the conflict-ridden relationship between stockmen and packers, but also explained that cattlemen were not monolithic in how they viewed packers and that the general animosity cooled over time. Jimmy Skaggs, in

*Prime Cut*, generally sees the packers as the perennial enemy of the cattlemen.<sup>5</sup> Much has been written about the livestock industry but the relationship between producers and packers is never a major focus.<sup>6</sup>

Most histories of the packers illustrate in some way their immense power. When scholars have looked at how the meat packers treated cattlemen, they take it for granted that they fixed prices and colluded to control the livestock market.<sup>7</sup> Historians who look at big business outreach to consumers have noted the great power and influence of the packers in shaping public opinion. Roland Marchand in *Creating the Corporate Soul* described how the big packers tried to legitimize their bigness through advertisements by casting themselves as familial and down to earth.<sup>8</sup> Scott Cutlip in *Unseen Power* briefly details the Institute of American Meat Packer's, the meat packer trade association, successful advertising campaign in the 1920s. These works hint at the massive propaganda campaign carried out by the packers. Scholars have characterized the big packers as manipulative, exploitative, and greedy. This study does not seek to change that assessment, but to understand why and how producers collaborated with them—especially given their reputation.

Historians have been more interested in other topics such as labor in the meat packing plants or the environmental effects of cattle and packing. They have followed in the tradition of muckrakers like Upton Sinclair who famously described wretched and unsafe conditions inside of “packingtown” in Chicago and Charles Russel who revealed the power of the big packer's beef trust in his work *The Greatest Trust in the World*. In contrast to these works is that of a professor from Northwestern University, Rudolf Clemen who published the first full scholarly treatment of the livestock and meat industry. He is one of the few scholars to write about the relationship between producer and packer, but he wrote in 1922 at the very beginning of their collaboration so he lacks insight into how well it worked. Furthermore, he was an editor for the packing trade

journal, the *National Provisioner*. His pro-packer bias is evident especially in his more contemporary chapters.

General works on the history of the livestock industry, aside from Rudolf Clemen's, fail to analyze the interaction between producers and packers as well. Jimmy Skaggs, who wrote the latest comprehensive history of the livestock and meat industry, tells the story of packers and producers almost independently of each other. He mentions that packers wanted to cooperate but does not explain how producers reacted to these overtures. Maureen Ogle's general history of the meat industry and American meat consumption also falls short. The story of producers and packers, rather than being intertwined is more like two parallel strands that hardly overlap. Most importantly, these works fail to note or only note in passing the most important institution in the relationship between the two groups that embodied the collaboration: The National Live Stock and Meat Board.

At the conclusion of the war on the packers, during a profusion of friendly sentiments, the producers, packers, and other members of the livestock and meat industry, formed a cooperative marketing association called the National Live Stock and Meat Board. The Meat Board served as a permanent connection where livestock leaders would physically meet with packers for several days out of the year. The operation of the Meat Board has been vastly underappreciated in the scholarly literature. Works that focus on the consumption end, such as Levenstein's *Paradox of Plenty* or Horowitz' *Putting Meat on the American Table*, briefly highlight the Meat Board's advertisements and publications but with little in the way of context. Wilson J. Warren in *Meat makes People Powerful* traces the role of science and the state in promoting meat consumption but contains little on the efforts of packers in this promotion and no mention of the Meat Board's role. The Meat Board promoted meat in many more ways than scholars have realized. The Meat Board,



regularly used other institutions, people, and parties, to get its message across. The Meat Board often remained hidden from public view.<sup>9</sup>

The Meat Board embodied the tenuous cooperation between packers and producers and operated on an associationalist model. During the Progressive Era, many reformers promoted associationalism as a “middle way” between capitalism and socialism. This political and socioeconomic philosophy sought to maintain the benefits of individualism, such as creativity, initiative, and hard work while ordering the economy through business-directed cooperation. These businesses would cooperate through trade and professional organizations and through these institutions would coordinate their industries to reduce waste and increase efficiency. The federal government, through the attorney general, allowed many “associational activities previously considered illegal” so that business leaders had greater power to coordinate their industries. In fact, associationalists conceived of their system as a partnership between government and private industry. Associationalists like Secretary of Commerce and later President Herbert Hoover wanted greater economic stability and efficiency but eschewed state planning. Instead, they relied on voluntary cooperation among businesses to regulate their industries. The main idea was that greater efficiency would benefit workers, owners, and consumers alike.<sup>10</sup> The system was built on an optimistic view of human nature that held that individuals would willingly sacrifice short term gains for long term stability. The Meat Board, built on associationalist principles, was a cooperative marketing association that included representatives from all facets of the livestock industry. These representatives had a say in crafting policies for the industry, but the desires of the meat packers tended to carry the greatest weight.

The packers and producers should have enjoyed great relations with Herbert Hoover, the father of associationalism, because they eagerly followed the associationalist model in the

livestock industry. In the vast amount of literature on Hoover, none of it really addresses his interaction with stockmen. Gary Koerselman provides the most extensive treatment and argues that the packers captured the Packer's and Stockyards Administration, even viewing Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace as complicit. Koerselman seems to miss the contingency of events in his assessment and views events that favored packers as the fruition of conspiracy.<sup>11</sup> David Hamilton's excellent work *From New Day to New Deal* examines Hoover's agricultural policies in relation to crops rather than livestock. When dealing with Hoover and agriculture, historians have preferred to look at farm crops, Hoover's policy toward the public domain, or focus on the political struggle of implementing farm policy.<sup>12</sup>

Clearly, because of the sheer size of the big meat packers, the relationship between producers and packers was not one of equals. Stockmen were dependent on the packers. This raises bigger questions about corporate capture of the stockmen through their associations and through the Meat Board. Stockmen launched their war on the packers toward the end of the Progressive Era. In some ways, this reflects the notion of the progressive movement as one where the people used the federal government to reign in big business. Seeing as how the producers collaborated with packers at the conclusion of the war and accepted packer leadership of the industry, this relationship can be described as a variant of Gabriel Kolko's claim that corporate interests influenced reform for their own good. While Kolko looks primarily at how business influenced state policies, this dissertation looks at how business influenced another economic group, the producers. My findings are also consistent with Martin J. Sklar's in that producers, or subordinates adopted the corporate outlook of big business.<sup>13</sup> Packers and producers shared the goals of what Otis L. Graham Jr identified as structural progressives because they worked to organize society in a rational manner through "centralization, integration of systems . . . coordination, and

efficiency.”<sup>14</sup> The Meat Board served as a place where the corporate outlook was cultivated and maintained. The Meat Board disseminated the pro-packer outlook all the while representing the voice of all industry representatives. Of course, producers did not blindly follow the packer lead in all things. Producers also worked for their own self-interest and hoped that the packer’s drive to make the industry more efficient would lead to better prices for them.

The producers collaborated with the packers through the Meat Board to do two things: make the entire industry more efficient and promote meat. Deborah Fitzgerald has described the spread of industrial logic in agriculture. She explained how the public and private sector both encouraged farmers to adopt new methods and technologies on their farms, to become more efficient.<sup>15</sup> Meat packers and leading livestock producers promoted the same industrial logic, the modernization of stock raising, but they also sought to make the entire industry more efficient by cutting out middlemen, by teaching retailers about accounting methods for tracking meat sales, and by educating consumers on the proper cooking methods of meat. Industrial logic in agriculture, in this case, extended far beyond the farm gate—industry leaders viewed the entire chain from production to consumption as an integrated system.

In this dissertation, I examine how producers went from war on the packers to tenuous cooperation with them and then trace the contours of that cooperation from 1914 to 1933. I look only at the very top of the industry, at the largest meat packing firms, at the leadership of the packer’s trade association, at the largest livestock association and its leadership, at the third largest livestock association, and at the executives of the Meat Board. Many other historians have looked at how family farms were affected by industrial logic, at how industrial logic spread throughout agriculture, at how advertising flourished, but I chose to look at how and why the livestock industry adopted these policies and strategies. This story ends in 1933 at the dawn of the New Deal, but the

patterns of collaboration by that time are evident. I also focus mainly on cattle production and beef because it provides a good case study for all meat and it provides a continuum between western ranchers and Midwestern feeders. Many Midwesterners also raised hogs in addition to cattle, while a number of westerners in the national livestock association raised sheep.

In the second chapter, I describe the war on the packers in depth, highlighting how the packers tried to manipulate producers, with some success and how the experience of the Food Administration soured many producers on the idea of government oversight of the livestock industry. I also show how the ANLSA almost split along pro and anti-packer lines before final passage of the Packers and Stockyards Act in 1921. Chapters three through five each look at a different aspect of collaboration between producer and packer in regard to meat retail, relationship with the federal government, and in creating a shared meat ideology. Chapters six and seven mainly look at how packers and the Meat Board used their power in subtle and often hidden ways to get producers to raise smaller cattle and get consumers to purchase more meat and to prepare it a certain way. It should be remembered that the Meat Board had producer representatives who supported the efforts of the Board. Chapter three outlines the creation of the National Live Stock and Meat Board and then follows how producers and packers each tried to gain advantage from the other group while simultaneously working to reform the retail end of the livestock industry. Chapter four details the relationship between packers, producers, and government and shows that producers gradually lost faith in the federal government to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act and, with trepidation, looked to leadership from the big packers, agreeing with their limited government philosophy. Chapter five shows the greatest amount of collaboration and agreement among packers and producers in their fight against vegetarianism and promotion of meat myths. Chapter six looks at how the big packers, the Meat Board, breeder's associations, and the Union

Stockyards promoted uniformity of cattle among producers and shaped consumer tastes. Much of this was done by promoting the scientific study of meat and livestock and then appealing to this science for objective standards. Finally, chapter seven looks specifically at how the Meat Board promoted meat among consumers through its home economics department.

At the conclusion of the war on the packers, producers began to collaborate formally and informally with the big meat packers in an effort to bring stability and efficiency to the livestock and meat industry from farm to table. The Meat Board served as the formal institution of collaboration and its policies were mutually agreed upon. The producers evinced no qualms in supporting the packer's efforts to shape retailers, commission men, and consumers. Producers tended to support many things that benefitted the packers.

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<sup>1</sup> ANLSA Convention, 1922, 48–50.

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Jimmy Skaggs, *Prime Cut: Livestock raising and Meatpacking in the United States, 1607–1983* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986),

<sup>3</sup> David M. Hart, “Herbert Hoover's Last Laugh: The Enduring Significance of the “Associative State” in the United States,” *Journal of Policy History* 10, no. 4 (October 1998): 419-444.

<sup>4</sup> John T. Schlebecker, *Cattle Raising on the Plains, 1900–1961* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 77, 122.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Wood, *The Kansas Beef Industry* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1980); Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 151–52.

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<sup>6</sup> Nathan F. Sayre, *Ranching, Endangered Species, and Urbanization in the Southwest: Species of Capital* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005); Karen R. Merrill, *Public Lands and Political Meaning: Ranchers, the Government, and the Property between them* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Robert M. Aduddell and Louis P. Cain, “Public Policy toward ‘The Greatest Trust in the World,’” *Business History Review* Vol. 55, no. 2 (Summer, 1981), 220; Mary Yeager, *Competition and Regulation: The Development of Oligopoly in the Meat Packing Industry* (Greenwich, CN: JAI Press, 1981); Maureen Ogle, *In Meat we Trust: An Unexpected History of Carnivore America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013); Skaggs, *Prime Cut*.

<sup>8</sup> Roland Marchand, *Creating the Corporate Soul: The Rise of Public Relations and Corporate Imagery in American Big Business*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> Francisco Buscemi describes the cultural constructions and meanings of meat in the 1920s and 30s without reference to meat packer and Meat Board propaganda. Francesco Buscemi, *From Body Fuel to Universal Poison: Cultural History of Meat from 1900 to the Present* (Gewerbstrasse, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018); Roger Horowitz, *Putting Meat on the American Table: Taste, Technology, Transformation*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) looks at the relationship between production and consumption of meat and how consumer demand is manifested in the meat industry, yet he does not address the role of the meat industry in attempting to shape that demand. Wilson J. Warren, *Meat makes People Powerful: A Global History of the Modern Era* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Ellis W. Hawley. “Herbert Hoover, the Commerce Secretariat, and the Vision of an ‘Associative State,’ 1921–1928.” *Journal of American History* 61 (June 1974): 116–140; Ellis

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W. Hawley, ed., *Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce: Studies in New Era Thought and Practice*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1974; Ellis Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order, A History of the American People and their Institutions, 1917–1933* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1979), 10, 102–3.

<sup>11</sup> Gary H. Koerselman, “Secretary Hoover and National Farm Policy: Problems of Leadership” *Agricultural History* 51, no. 2 (April 1977), 378–395; Gary H. Koerselman, “Herbert Hoover and the Farm Crisis of the Twenties: A Study of the Commerce Department's efforts to solve the Agricultural Depression, 1921–1928” (PhD diss: Northern Illinois University, 1971).

<sup>12</sup> Kendrick A. Clements, *Hoover, Conservation, and Consumerism: Engineering the Good Life* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000) looks at Hoover’s ideas on conservation and stockmen on the public domain; James H. Shideler, “Herbert Hoover and the Federal Farm Board Project, 1921–1925,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 42, no. 4 (March 1956), 712; Joan Hoff Wilson, “Herbert Hoover’s Agricultural Policies, 1921–1928,” in *Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce: Studies in New Era Thought and Practice*, ed. Ellis Hawley, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1974).

<sup>13</sup> Gabriel Kolko, *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900–1916* (New York: Free Press, 1963). In the case of packers in particular, Kolko explains how, contrary to popular belief, they were the ones who wanted a meat inspection law after publication of *The Jungle*, 77. Martin J. Sklar, *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890–1916: The Market, the Law, and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> Otis L. Graham, Jr., *The Great Campaigns: Reform and War in America, 1900–1928*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1971), 130.

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<sup>15</sup> Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003).



## **Chapter 2 - Fighting over Market Fairness: The War on the Packers**

In July 1916, prominent rancher and Princeton University graduate Dan Casement told a Swift company official that “too often the feeder offering his product at the [stockyard] gets the impression – and with reason – that the only representative of the packer whom he encounters in the pens is a rather arrogant person on whose appearance the market waits and who appears at such a time as he elects.” He complained that the stockman’s cattle were fed and watered “at high prices” by the “same interests.” Many stockmen probably felt as Casement did that, “he is in [the packer’s] hands and, to an extent, at their mercy from the moment that his cattle are yarded.” While at the stockyards, cattlemen anxiously awaited the arrival of the buyer, or commission man, who, Casement suspected, was working only for “the packer’s good will.” The commission man was a middleman with offices at the stockyard who purchased cattle from the stockman on behalf of the packers. To Casement and most likely many other feeders, the packer seemed “contemptuous of the feeder’s rights.”<sup>16</sup>

Stockmen and packers came into contact with each other on an unequal basis at the stockyards of the West and Midwest. Western cattlemen called “growers” raised cattle on their ranches until they reached about two years old and then the growers would sell them to the packers or to “feeders.” The feeder was a stockman, usually residing in the Midwest, who bought cattle in order to fatten them on grain. The feeder, in a sense, speculated that future cattle prices would provide a profitable return on his investment. Once the cattle reached optimum weight, which is a brief window of just a few weeks out of the year, the feeder must sell them before losing money on the investment. When ready to sell, the feeder transported the fattened cattle by train to the nearest stockyard—many of which were owned at least in part by the big packers—where the cattle were unloaded and taken to a holding pen. The stockman waited for the buyer, or commission

man, to come around and offer a price on the cattle. While waiting, the stockman incurred fees for water and feed for his or her cattle.

Casement's animosity toward the packers began in 1914 when the packers disrespected the producers by failing to show up to a conference that addressed low cattle prices. Because of this snub by the packers, the American National Livestock Association (ANLSA) created a market committee that successfully lobbied for a federal investigation of the packers for their suspected collusion on setting livestock prices. During this so-called war on the packers, the stockmen proclaimed that they did not want to destroy the packers but wanted cooperation with them after fair markets were established. The packers claimed that the law of supply and demand was working properly while most producers held that it was not and that government intervention in the livestock industry was necessary. The packers fought the federal investigation through publicity and converted some stockmen to their side. However, the dismal experience that stockmen had with the meat division of the Food Administration during World War I convinced many of them that government control of the packers or stockyards was not in their best interest. As Congress debated bills on the packers that ranged from government ownership to government licensing, the ANLSA divided over the degree of federal involvement at the stockyards. After Congress passed the Packers and Stockyards Act, the stockmen of the ANLSA eagerly collaborated with the packers along associational lines.

Rancher Dan Casement understood that the feeders were price takers. Cattlemen were at the mercy of the packers when they delivered their cattle to the stockyards. A feeder could not profitably remove his cattle from, for instance, the Kansas City, Missouri stockyards to seek a better price at the one in Omaha, Nebraska. He would not only incur more expenses from shipping his cattle by train and feeding them at the stockyard, but he would also risk damaging his livestock

en route by bruising and even goring. Nor could the cattleman be certain of a better price at another market. Indeed, livestock raisers lacked “exit power—the power to walk away from the negotiating table.”<sup>17</sup>

The packers, on the other hand, exercised monopsony, meaning that they had buyer power. Casement understood this monopsony when he explained that “the few powerful middlemen, who are almost the sole customers of the feeder, exercise improper control over the market and, to a greater or less extent, dictate prices.” Because the big meat packers had packing plants at virtually every stockyard in the country, and between them accounted for over eighty percent of the interstate dressed beef trade they had the ability to set prices for livestock. If the livestock industry is thought of like an hourglass, then the stockmen would be at one end and consumers at the other with the big packers at the most constricted point of the hourglass. What this meant was that there was little or no competition for the stockmen’s cattle, making it possible in theory, if not in fact, for the big packers to set prices.<sup>18</sup>

The packers rose to their dominant position in the late nineteenth century as the livestock industry, in general, grew in size and scope. After the Civil War, Joseph McCoy bridged the gap between cheap Longhorns in Texas and high meat prices in New York City. The rising middle class, urban populations there “had a taste for high quality beef and the means to buy it.”<sup>19</sup> To meet that demand cowboys drove Longhorns over the Chisolm Trail to newly created stockyards in Abilene and other Kansas towns. Entrepreneurs like Samuel Allerton created massive central livestock markets like the Chicago Union Stockyards to house cattle, arrange buyers, and then shipped them out to distribution centers or to the corn belt to be fattened. Packers established facilities at the central stockyards and stockmen in the West formed large cattle and land companies, many funded by English and Scottish capital that kept the stockyards running. In 1884

stockmen organized the first ever national meeting to discuss industry wide issues.<sup>20</sup> The origin of the big packer's dominance of the livestock industry dated back to the 1880s with the introduction of refrigerated railroad cars—pioneered by T. S. Rankin years earlier—and the new business organization that they developed in order to manage their national, and later global, operations.<sup>21</sup>

Initially, competition between the big packing houses of Armour, Swift, and Morris was intense and caused them to lose money, but by 1886 they decided to cooperate and formed a pool. From then until 1902, the big meat packers attempted different pooling arrangements and, with difficulty, incorporated upstart meat packers Cudahy and then Sulzberger and Sons into the pool. In popular culture, this arrangement became known as the “big five” meat packers. During this time “the packers acted together to depress the price of livestock by offering high prices until they attracted large shipments to the stockyards, then withdrawing from the market until the shippers, in desperation, were ready to sell at any figure they could get.”<sup>22</sup>

The pools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were formal and hurt the packers' reputation. In the so-called Veeder pool, the big meat packers submitted weekly financial reports to Henry Veeder, the lawyer who supervised it. If a packing house exceeded its shipments for the week then it paid the pool, but if it was under the predetermined amount for the week, then it was paid from the pool. The pool also tried to regulate the price paid for livestock at all stockyards. The packers standardized the way they determined costs, meaning that the only variable was the price paid for livestock. However, federal charges of “collusion and restraint of trade” led to a Supreme Court injunction against the Veeder Pool in 1903. Then Armour, Morris, and Swift formed a holding company called the National Packing Company (NPC), but this was a public relations disaster. The big packers added many businesses to it, prompting the muckraker Charles Edward Russell to label it *The Greatest Trust in the World*. A prominent cattleman later

called NPC the “death knell of competition.”<sup>23</sup> The Department of Justice brought charges of restraint of trade against National Packing Company, but the big packers dissolved the company in 1912 “to avoid further litigation.”<sup>24</sup> Due to this publicity, the packers developed a well-deserved reputation for collusion.

The packers then created a global pool. Packers supplied the growing domestic market, which meant that they exported less domestic beef. To continue supplying the global market, the big five bought and built packing plants in South America—Swift was the first to do so in 1907. Here they took advantage of the low cost of labor and low cost of land, which translated into low overhead. This allowed the packers to remain competitive globally. The packers colluded in South America just as they had done stateside. A similar pattern to the one in the US played out in Argentina. Producers in Argentina even had their own version of the war on the packers. Consumers and cattlemen allied together against the big five because of high retail prices and low producer prices. Many of them called for government ownership of packing companies.<sup>25</sup>

Despite packer collusion, producers were not as upset with the packers as one might expect. When prices were acceptable, stockmen complained very little about the packers. The first historian of the livestock industry as well as associate editor of the *National Provisioner*—a meat packer journal—stated that the first “generation of the large packers, in some cases at least, had been cattlemen and had cultivated friendly relations with livestock producers.”<sup>26</sup> In addition, producers were usually more concerned with railroads, rustlers, and cattle diseases. In fact, in 1914, a member of the American National Live Stock Association who would soon lead the so called “war on the packers” gave high praise to the packers. He told his fellow stockmen that “without this wonderful economic system of slaughtering, packing, and distributing built up by a comparatively small number of businessmen, whose genius for organization has probably never

been surpassed in this or any other country, your investments in livestock would not be worth fifty cents on the dollar.” He even referred to the facilities as “magnificent packing plants.”<sup>27</sup>

This is not to imply that relations were ideal. They were tenuous at best, but conditions had never before deteriorated to the point they did from 1916 to around 1921, the period of the “war on the packers.” This “war” was touched off by an act of disrespect. In 1915, cattlemen, especially feeders, suffered “heavy and unexpected losses” due to low cattle prices when European demand should have translated into high cattle prices. In November of that year, cattlemen called a conference to address livestock prices, which was held in Chicago under the auspices of the Bureau of Markets. In addition to USDA officials, the Bureau invited stockmen, packers, meat wholesalers and meat retailers. The big packers did not attend in person but instead sent representatives. These representatives said very little at the conference and did not explain why stock prices had not increased. Stockmen viewed this as a slap in the face and a storm of protest erupted at stockmen’s association meetings in the West and Midwest in the next few months.<sup>28</sup> Historian and packer sympathizer, Rudolf Clemen explained that the current “generation of packers le[ft] relations [with producers] to subordinates,” which gave the producers “an impression of indifference.”<sup>29</sup>

The American National Live Stock Association was the largest stockmen’s organization in the United States and took the lead in prosecuting the “war on the packers.” Members of the ANLSA consisted of growers, those in the West who raised cattle for their first year or two and feeders, who usually purchased from the growers in order to fatten the cattle and sell them at the stockyard. Range producers of the West—usually growers—generally did not deal directly with the packers, but when they did, they often benefitted from competition between packers and feeders for their cattle. At the urging of ANLSA president and grower Dwight B. Heard, range stockmen supported the feeders in their need for a fair return on their livestock.

The war on the packers was slow to develop and only broke out because of the packer's apparent unconcern for the feeder's plight. The committee on stockyards and livestock exchanges of the ANLSA recommended to President Heard that he appoint a committee to investigate the marketing situation. When stockmen referred to marketing they generally referred to the process of selling cattle, which included shipping costs, feeding costs at the stockyard, the commission rates of the buyers, and, of course, the always variable per pound prices for livestock at the stockyard. He appointed a special committee made up of rancher and Senator John B. Kendrick of Wyoming; prominent Nebraska cattle feeder, Edward L. Burke a graduate of Yale University; and A. E. de Ricqlès, president of a livestock and loan company and a cattle company in Colorado; among others. Their initial findings suggested that supply and demand was not functioning as it should at the stockyards. Based on the findings of the committee, which were published in a pamphlet and distributed to all ANLSA members, the president addressed a letter of explanation to Secretary of Agriculture David F. Houston. The Secretary understood the seriousness of the situation and recommended that Heard "arrange for a public hearing of all concerned" to be held in the Fall of 1915. Secretary Houston actually called the conference in October, which was attended by "cattle producers and feeders, the stockyards men, the transportation companies, the trade journals, the livestock exchanges, the retail butcher's associations," but only "a few representatives of the slaughtering interests." According to Heard, the discussions were "practical and frank" but the packer representatives participated only "slightly"—a fact that producers "sincerely regretted."<sup>30</sup>

The meeting resulted in general agreement between railroad representatives, commission men, and producers, that there were "violent and unnatural fluctuations" in the price of livestock at the stockyards and that this volatility "did not seem to be justified by the natural law of supply

and demand.” They also agreed that competition at the terminal markets was decreasing, that feeders were breaking even or selling at a loss while packers were making “exceptionally handsome profits.” The ANLSA proposed a number of remedies, such as: “a more even distribution of receipts on five days of the week;” “a weekly publication by the government of data as to the meat supply on hand; the establishment of public abattoirs [slaughterhouses] in connection with public stockyards;” packers to be divested of their interests in stockyards; “commission houses not to serve as both seller and buyer of the same stock;” “federal and state supervision of the methods and practices of the central markets;” and “a greater cooperation toward the end of securing unrestricted competition.”<sup>31</sup>

In early winter in El Paso, Texas, President Heard addressed the assembled stockmen of the ANLSA at their nineteenth annual convention on the issue of low cattle prices at the terminal stockyards. President Heard first explained current conditions to the ANLSA, the basic situation was that cattle in proportion to the population of the US was lower than in past years, that due to the war in Europe, American export of beef products increased dramatically in 1915, and that during the same time beef product imports had declined by “over thirty percent.” However, in spite of the facts presented, “the average price for native beef steers at Chicago for the first ten months of 1915” was “nearly eight percent” lower than 1914. According to supply and demand, the price of livestock should have been much higher than it was in the previous year. His conclusion was that the packers were tampering with the market. Heard recommended “the utmost team play between the cattle-producers on the range and the cattle-feeders on the farm” in solving this problem. He spoke of the need for each interest to make a profit and implied that the packer was taking undue profit at the expense of the feeder. President Heard considered it the most important issue facing the stockmen at the time.<sup>32</sup>



As a step toward a solution, the ANLSA formed a market committee to investigate the low prices and it proved extremely popular among stockmen. Members of the ANLSA gave tremendous support to the newly appointed market committee. After explaining to the stockmen the importance of funding the market committee, President Heard raised \$54,000 in thirty minutes. This was more than double the entire annual budget for the ANLSA.<sup>33</sup> The committee consisted of Henry A. Jastro, E. L. Burke, A. E. de Ricqles, J. B. Kendrick, and Ike T. Pryor. They also secured former Secretary of the Interior Walter E. Fisher as counsel for the committee.<sup>34</sup>

In other parts of the country, producers also supported an investigation of the packing industry. In the Midwest, for example, the Kansas Livestock Association, in its annual meeting of 1916 condemned the packers. The meeting was raucous, and although a few voices defended the packers, the general tenor was opposed.<sup>35</sup>

While stockmen were upset with the big packers, they did not want to destroy them. In fact, stockmen still recognized the packer's essential role in the livestock industry. Member of the market committee de Ricqles believed that "it would be practically impossible for anyone to find a stock-grower who does not wish the packers to be successful in their undertakings." Speaking for all stockmen, he explained that "we are all exceedingly anxious to see them able to continue in the business of handling our product satisfactorily and profitably."<sup>36</sup> President Heard also recognized the "mutual interest of the producer, the feeder, and the slaughterer."<sup>37</sup> The following year, President Heard declared that "cooperation is what we want in the livestock industry today—just as much as we need it in every other industry in America today, and in our social and political life." But Heard was quick to point out that this cooperation must be based on a just distribution of profits.<sup>38</sup> Heard's desire for even-handedness did not escape the notice of the big packing firm

of Swift. In an office memo about Dwight Heard's address, a Swift official wrote that Heard "[did] not desire to handicap the packers."<sup>39</sup>

ANLSA leaders also expressed the belief that personal contact between producers and packers would improve relations. E. L. Burke of the market committee explained to the ANLSA convention of 1916 that "the packers are men just like ourselves. They have gradually, perhaps almost unconsciously, built up this huge machine, so large and complicated that all personal contact between buyer and seller has been eliminated. The machine is an immense steam roller, which crushes the life out of the producer, without the buyer even hearing the groans of his victim. Both buyer and seller are the victims of modern industrial methods. The problem is to restore the human element so that the milk of human kindness might flow again."<sup>40</sup> Dwight Heard also thought that the way to reach an understanding was "to sit down in conference with the real executive heads of the packers, thresh out the situation fairly with them, arrange what matters could be adjusted by mutual agreement, and decide on some fair, just method of procedure for straightening out those differences on which an agreement could not be reached."<sup>41</sup> It was due to the packer's apparent disregard of face to face conferences that the "war" against them was begun in the first place.

The big packers did not take the ANLSA war against them lying down. They initiated a massive publicity campaign directed at consumers as well as stockmen. Prior to 1916, the Swift publicity department had been refuting negative publicity in a reactive way, by countering critical newspaper accounts and writing personal letters to people who publicly criticized them. But in January 1916, Swift official James Chaplin wanted to address in a better way the "misinformation and the fallacies" about packing.<sup>42</sup> A few months later, he proposed a positive campaign to defend the packers and win over the "conservative element" of stockmen. He wanted "Armour, and

Morris, and S and S” to cooperate with them in the ad campaign “so that a statement could be made that will represent the industry.”<sup>43</sup> George Swift stated that the best method for publicity would be to “din into the public ears on every possible occasion the small profit we make figured both on a per pound and a percent basis” and that this information should be included in “practically every letter that is written answering a criticism.”<sup>44</sup>

Packers such as Swift and company went to great lengths to win the favor of critics. A case in point is an exchange between Swift officials and Kansas rancher and writer for the *Breeder's Gazette*, Dan Casement. Executives at Swift were alarmed by Casement's article in the *Breeder's Gazette* titled “the Cost of Making Beef,” and desired to counter it. The company did not take criticism lightly. A rebuttal letter was prepared and sent to Louis Swift for approval. It was then sent to J. H. Mercer, Secretary of the Kansas Livestock Association, who presumably notified Casement of Swift's desire to contact him.<sup>45</sup>

In the Spring of 1916, Casement corresponded with officials at Swift about the packer's role in controlling prices. Casement's article had outlined his unsatisfactory experience at a certain stockyard, and the packer official offered to trace the lot of steers that Casement sold and explain exactly the reasons for the price to Casement. Intrigued, Casement accepted the offer. About three weeks later, Swift and Co. sent Casement a financial statement showing the price paid for his cattle and the other expenses he incurred at the stockyards. However, they could not determine exactly what Casement's twenty-four steers sold for, but could at least tell him that his cattle were in a group of “305 heavy fat native steers,” which sold for \$14.72 per cwt which afforded Swift a profit of five cents per cwt.<sup>46</sup>

Casement was forthright in expressing his opinion of the war on the packers. In a lengthy letter, Casement explained that producer animosity toward the big packers was based on the

suspicion that they dictated prices. He recognized that the evidence demonstrating packer control of the market was circumstantial and only “further excite[d] the producer’s hostile suspicions without being of any considerable value or actual proof.” This suspicion, he explained, was what led to the creation of the ANLSA’s market committee.

Casement also recognized the necessity of personal relations with the packers. He explained that “heartly cooperation by the packer in this effort would tend to remedy the whole difficulty in the quickest and best way.” One way to bring this about was through expressions of good will. He told the packer official that “it would be helpful if the packer would take steps to cultivate a better understanding and friendlier relations with the producer when he comes into contact with him on the market.” Casement was thinking of the stockyards where the producer felt like he was at the mercy of the “arrogant” buyer and the commission men who he thought served the packer interests first. Casement compared selling at the stockyard to gambling because once a producer rolled the dice and brought his cattle to the yard, he could not take it back. He must wait on the buyer and accept whatever price he gives him. For Casement then, the issue boiled down to a lack of trust that could be overcome by packer efforts at amiability.<sup>47</sup>

The packer official also wanted cooperation. He lamented the “wild and vague accusations” of certain cattlemen and complained that the market committee “insisted upon pre-judging the guilt of five important business houses of this country, naming them and directing attention to their alleged illegal conduct.” He explained that many of the grievances of the producers could have been resolved through conferences.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps the packer official had forgotten that it was they, and not the producers, who snubbed a conference.

Swift officials had not expected a frank and open discussion with a member of the executive committee of the ANLSA. Louis Swift even intervened in the correspondence, stating

in a letter to the packer official corresponding with Casement, that “in view of the turn which this thing has taken and his frank statement that he [Casement] is lined up against us, I would suggest that the correspondence be referred to the publicity committee.” Swift cautioned that “we have to be careful what we say to Mr. Casement because he will undoubtedly pass the entire correspondence on to the market committee.” Perhaps in reference to Casement’s urging of friendship, Swift advised his employee to “invite him to Chicago to meet your committee and some of the Swifts.”<sup>49</sup> Another Swift executive was “impressed” with Casement’s letters and hoped to turn Casement into a packer supporter. He also thought that a Chicago visit would be beneficial, stating that “if we could get him in here with Mr. Chaplin and convince him of the justice of our claims, I am sure that he would be a very valuable champion of our cause.”<sup>50</sup> Swift official R. C. McManus subsequently invited Casement to Chicago to visit.<sup>51</sup> As will be seen later, Casement became a defender of the packers.

The war on the packers was also a debate over the workings of capitalism in regard to supply and demand. The big packing firms had grown large through new technologies and through new methods of organization. Their scope and size gave them efficiencies of scale but at the price of competition. The big packing firms, as explained above, refused to compete for cattle prices. The stockyards were thus imperfectly competitive markets. Although the big five did not compete in the purchase of live cattle, they did compete in other areas such as product differentiation, price discrimination, advertising, and promotion.<sup>52</sup> Social critic Lewis Corey referred to this as “negative competition.” He explained that packers “competed” to make as much money as they could from existing arrangements and from the lowering of costs to make bigger profits out of established prices. Historian Mary Yeager, on the other hand, referred to this as the “new competition.”<sup>53</sup> She

explained that competition between the big meat packers did not end with the pools, but only changed form. Rather than compete for market share, they competed for price.<sup>54</sup>

The packers claimed that supply and demand set the price for live cattle. Swift official Chaplin explained that the packers knew from experience that a large supply of beef on the market would “seriously reduce the price.”<sup>55</sup> The problem, explained Chaplin, was that meat was a perishable commodity and therefore the packers had to assume that they would sell what they purchased within a week or ten days. Swift explained that the big meat packers made most of their profit through volume and the sale of by-products. The company claimed only to make fractions of cents per pound on dressed beef. It made most of its profits on the other parts of the animal, such as pituitary glands sold to medical labs.

The packers offered their own solution to the low market prices for cattle. Swift, perhaps speaking for all of the packers, stated that “there is only one solution to this problem of the rising cost of meat and that is more live stock.” This internal Swift memo explained that the stock raiser would profit by increasing the quality and quantity of the livestock, which would require greater capital investments. For the solution to be permanent, it must come from “gradual building up of farming and stock raising,” an increase in soil fertility, and greater efficiency on the part of the producer.<sup>56</sup> As will be demonstrated later, the stockmen accepted this advice in the 1920s. Swift was promoting what historian Deborah Fitzgerald called “industrial logic.”<sup>57</sup> It does not take much imagination to see that this type of thinking—the logic of capitalism—is behind the confined animal feeding lots of today. Market committee member E. L. Burke even questioned capitalism as an economic system, stating that “the present deplorable conditions is due largely to the laissez-faire system that has prevailed in this country—the idea being that, by allowing things to take their own course, they will, in the long run, work out satisfactorily.”<sup>58</sup>

The solution, as many stockmen of the ANLSA saw it, was to have a federal investigation into the packing industry. Stockmen claimed that the packers were controlling prices at the stockyards, and they simply wanted to restore competition in the market as well as in the distribution of meats. They wanted to break up the big packer's trust. These stockmen wanted a government investigation, preferably by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), into the packing houses and some sort of regulation of the packing industry afterward.

To the surprise of packers and stockmen alike, Representative William P. Borland (D) of Missouri introduced a resolution "calling for an investigation of the meat packers and all allied transportation facilities" in February 1916.<sup>59</sup> Borland's resolution was not sponsored or endorsed by the ANLSA, but the market committee attended the hearings on it.<sup>60</sup> The market committee did not think that the Borland resolution was "as broad as it should be, and did not cover certain important points at issue," but despite its objections, it "warmly support[ed] this resolution."<sup>61</sup> Swift officials also objected to the Borland resolution because of its limited scope but furthermore because it charged packers with crimes before the investigation was even begun. Indeed, the resolution mentioned Swift and three other packing companies by name and it asked the FTC to "investigate and report to the House of Representatives the facts relating to any or all violations of the antitrust laws of the United States."<sup>62</sup> Within a month, Swift officials, McManus, White, and Chaplin traveled to Washington, DC to determine the scope of anti-meat packer sentiment. They judged "the situation to be serious." In a memo that they sent to officials of all of the big five packing companies, they recommended "that everything be done to head off the present movement."<sup>63</sup> Swift, for its part, increased its expenditures on publicity hoping to sway public opinion in favor of the big five, and ultimately prevent the investigation from taking place.<sup>64</sup>

The packers effectively lobbied against Borland's resolution for a federal investigation. In the months prior to the Borland Resolution, the big five had made retroactive campaign contributions to congressman Joseph Taggart of Kansas. These contributions by the big five were split along the same percentages as they divided their market share of livestock. Swift and co. hired Thomas F. Logan, an advertising guru, at \$6,000 a year for advice on publicity. It did not hurt that Logan was also friends with President Woodrow Wilson's advisor Joseph Tumulty and provided information to Swift that was probably obtained from him.<sup>65</sup>

The big five also tried to influence the stockmen of the ANLSA. They paid expenses for cattlemen to travel to Washington DC to testify on the Borland Resolution. Swift official McManus was also in contact with secretary of the ANLSA Thomas W. Tomlinson, a graduate of Cornell University law.<sup>66</sup> Swift lawyer Henry Veeder said that McManus and Tomlinson were trying to devise some "joint action," other than the Borland Resolution that both producers and packers could agree on. They met several times and Tomlinson even sent him confidential information about an ANLSA market committee meeting.<sup>67</sup> When this connection between Tomlinson and Swift Company came to light two years later, the ANLSA investigated Tomlinson's correspondence with Swift lawyer Henry Veeder and surprisingly found their secretary to be "working in the interest of the ANLSA."<sup>68</sup>

In the winter of 1916, the market committee gained an important ally in its fight for market fairness. The market committee was invited to present its case in front of the National Conference on Marketing and Farm Credits on December 6, 1916. They saw this as a great opportunity to broaden their base of support and "secure the support of thousands of small farmers whose interests are partly in agriculture and partly in livestock."<sup>69</sup> Many members of the market committee spoke before the 2,000 in attendance representing two million farmers. E. L. Burke, Ed Lasater, Sec.



Tomlinson, Dwight Heard, Ricqles, Kendrick and others spoke about the packers and the need for an investigation.<sup>70</sup>

Packers and producers came to an agreement about an investigation after a summit of sorts at the Chicago Union Stockyard office of Louis Swift. Representing the producers were ANLSA president Dwight Heard, E. L. Burke, de Ricqels, Walter Fisher, John Kendrick, William J. Tod, and Joseph Mercer. Louis Swift and the four other big packers were present as well. At the meeting, the big packers agreed to support an FTC investigation as long as it would not presume the packer's guilt prior to the investigation and as long as it would investigate the entire livestock industry, in the words of Louis Swift, from the "calf to the table." The packers wanted the investigation to consider the costs to the grower and feeder and the profits of the packers, as well as the retailers. For this reason, the packers supported President Woodrow Wilson's order to the FTC of February 7, 1917, "to investigate and report the facts relating to the production, ownership, manufacture, storage, and distribution of foodstuffs and the products or byproducts arising from or in connection with their preparation and manufacture."<sup>71</sup> Louis Swift even sent a telegram to the FTC stating that "the books and records of Swift and Co. will be freely open to the commission and its representatives."<sup>72</sup> Burke was hopeful after this meeting when he told the ANLSA convention that "we have met with them [the packers] both individually and as a committee" and they have agreed not to oppose the FTC hearing. He also noted that "there [was] a pronounced change for the better" in their attitude over the last year.<sup>73</sup>

However, the FTC investigation proceeded to devote most of its attention to the packers and claimed to have found "conclusive evidence" of "monopolies, controls, trusts, combinations, conspiracies, or restraints of trade out of harmony with the law and the public interest" and that the producer, consumer, and competitor are all at their "mercy."<sup>74</sup> The FTC, though, exaggerated

some of its claims. It claimed that the packers exercised greater control over the global food supply than was the actual case and overstated packer dominance of non-meat food industries.<sup>75</sup> The FTC was fearful that the big five were “attempting to monopolize the nation’s food supply.”<sup>76</sup>

While it overstated some claims, some were accurate. One of these was that the FTC investigation confirmed the producer’s suspicions of the existence of a “livestock pool,” which was created in 1903. According to the provisions of the livestock pool, the big five divided the “purchase of cattle, sheep, and hogs sent to market according to certain fixed percentages, which could be agreed upon for long periods and needed to be changed only when conditions were greatly altered, as, for example, when one of the big packers purchased an independent plant.” When two or more of the big five packers had plants at the same stockyard, they split the livestock purchases among themselves according to prearranged percentages. At the Ft. Worth stockyard, for instance, where Swift and Armour were the only big five packers, they split the stock between them, 50/50. The problem with this setup, as the FTC pointed out, was that there were “no truly competitive purchases.” Each morning at the stockyard, after a few initial purchases, the one company would see what the other was offering and the “common price inevitably becomes that offered by the low bidder.” Thus, without any other collusion besides the fact that they divide the supply, the market price was set at the lowest price that would keep the producer bringing livestock to market.<sup>77</sup>

The packers then were guilty of doing exactly what the producers suspected. The evidence presented in the FTC report leaves little doubt that the big five, through their control of stockyards, acted as “collusive oligopsonists,” because they agreed to follow common practices with respect to setting price and output. In further confirmation of the FTC report, one economic historian found that this collusion probably did raise the price to consumers and probably allowed the packers to profit at the expense of the producers.<sup>78</sup>

Based on its findings, the FTC recommended government ownership of railroad cars for transporting livestock, stockyards, refrigerated railroad cars, branch houses, and cold storage facilities. The FTC hoped that government ownership would ensure open and competitive markets.<sup>79</sup> Congress was unwilling to act on the FTC recommendations because it viewed them as too “radical.” Instead, the Justice Department, under A. Mitchell Palmer, began gathering a case against the packers for violations of antitrust laws.<sup>80</sup> The Justice Department under Palmer had gathered evidence for months and concluded that the probability of monopoly warranted “prosecution under anti-trust law.”<sup>81</sup> Palmer may have also initiated the hearings as a way to drum up support for his ultimately unsuccessful bid for the Democratic nominee for president.

Even as the FTC investigation was ongoing, certain things connected to U.S. entry into the first World War helped to shift some producer opinion in favor of the packers. One was the unpopularity of the Food Administration (FA), which many producers viewed as an example of a government regulated meat industry, and also because wartime nationalism strengthened the sense of unity that had been growing within the livestock industry.

The Food Administration was a wartime expedient created by executive order in May 1917 and then given authority by Congress in the Lever Food and Fuel Act in August of that same year.<sup>82</sup> President Woodrow Wilson appointed Herbert Hoover, the hero of Belgium relief, to head the new administration, which was tasked with stabilizing the food supply by “encouraging the production, conserving the supply, and controlling the distribution of food products.”<sup>83</sup> In an effort to increase the meat supply for the allies, Hoover asked feeders to raise more cattle and asked American consumers to eat less meat.

This dual policy of increased production yet also “meatless” days for consumers, had disastrous consequences for the feeders. Hoover relied on voluntary methods to get Americans to

follow the FA guidelines, which meant that it relied heavily on propaganda. FA propaganda appealed to housewives to sign a pledge to follow its rules. The FA also “learned the importance of slogans, brand names, and visual propaganda” from the “fledgling advertising industry.”<sup>84</sup> Its appeal was highly effective with upper-class women who were the primary consumers of the feeders’ high grade finished beef. Working class Americans, on the other hand, using their high wartime wages, ate more meat, but it was low-grade meat and did not help the feeders.<sup>85</sup>

Many members of the ANLSA served within the Food Administration’s meat division. Hoover appointed vice president of the ANLSA John Kendrick, who was also a sitting U.S. Senator from Wyoming, as the head of the range cattle committee; ANLSA market committee member Walter Stubbs—a former Kansas governor—was in charge of the feeder committee; and ANLSA market committee member Henry C. Wallace—future secretary of agriculture—was in charge of the corn and hog committee. The cattle committee also included ANLSA market committee members E. L. Burke and Dwight Heard.<sup>86</sup>

Despite the many ANLSA members in the FA, it and Hoover became extremely unpopular among virtually all farmers and stockmen. These agriculturalists claimed that Hoover favored the “urban consumer” at the expense of the farmer. Feeders especially felt betrayed by Hoover.<sup>87</sup> Many stockmen were unnerved by the power exercised by what they viewed as a government bureaucrat, as when Hoover fixed prices for wheat or when he prevented poultry from being marketed for a whole season. Even the meat division of the Food Administration was not altogether on board with Food Administration policies. Virtually none of the ANLSA members of the meat division endorsed the meatless days. Even the head of the meat division, Joseph Cotton, admitted that meatless days may have lowered the price of cattle.<sup>88</sup> Fortunately for stockmen, in March 1918, Hoover quietly ended the meatless days, but by that point, the damage was done—the FA

propaganda had been so effective that many consumers chose to continue meatless days, still feeling as though they were helping the war effort.

Stockmen of the ANLSA were divided on the Food Administration, which for them had become the exemplar of a federally regulated livestock industry that the anti-packers wanted. ANLSA market committee member E. L. Burke made the connection explicit in a speech before the ANLSA in January 1918. He stated that under the Food Administration “we have the very thing we want”—meaning government oversight of the packers—but cautioned that it was only a war measure and would not be permanent. He admitted that it was not perfect, and he recognized a surprising number of defects with it.<sup>89</sup> He recognized the low prices for feeders and the unnecessary and harmful meatless days. Later, in a Senate investigation, Burke denounced Hoover’s claim that he only fixed prices on a couple of commodities because, he said, Hoover was using “indirect methods of control.”<sup>90</sup>

Other ANLSA leaders viewed the FA positively, but with drawbacks. John Kendrick looked at the FA favorably.<sup>91</sup> ANLSA president Ike Pryor also saw it as a good thing, but with some flaws. He was pleased that the FA regulated the meat packers. He also thought that the FA regulation should be carried on.<sup>92</sup> Former ANLSA president Dwight Heard, was more critical of the FA, calling it government paternalism, but urging the need for supporting it for the war effort even though “it is a little hard for us to get used to” and “a little hard for our friends, the packers, to get used to.” However, he thought that “its general policy [was] good” mainly because it kept people from being greedy and avaricious.<sup>93</sup>

Joseph Cotton, head of the FA meat division, defended the FA, but surely not on terms to the stockmen’s liking. He admitted that there were some “overenthusiastic followers” of conservation within the FA, but he defended meatless days. He said that American people “eat

more meat than is good for them” and that “this large meat eating is a luxury.” He explained further that to “consuming communities” the meatless and wheatless days “have come to be the visible symbols by which the people pledge themselves to help win the war.” And besides, he continued, we will have to eat less meat in the future, so it is better to start now than be forced into it at a later date.<sup>94</sup>

Many other stockmen disliked the FA. Dan Casement referred to it as a “socialistic makeshift.”<sup>95</sup> ANLSA executive committee member Frank Hagenbarth complained that it was nonsensical to tell producers to raise more stock and consumers to eat less meat. He explained that stockmen must be given a market when their livestock is ready or else they lose money. Challenging Cotton’s claim about meat as a luxury, Hagenbarth echoed a common sentiment among those in the livestock industry, that “Americans are a meat eating people. Meat is high in protein, and is a necessary food for our laboring men and for our growing children.”<sup>96</sup>

Executive committee member and advisor to the FA Ed Lasater seemed to view government supervision as worse than the packer’s oligopoly. Hoover, he stated, had claimed that farmers would at least gain a modest profit, but this was not happening under the FA. He accused meat division head Cotton of favoring the consumer by keeping the price of beef low while giving all of the producers profit to the big meat packers. He said that the stockmen were being exploited. He showed his apprehension about federal regulation when he stated that “even the packers of our country are dependent upon the national government for what they are allowed to take for their services rendered. Today, to meet the exigencies of war, we have been forced to concentrate power as we never dreamed of it being concentrated before.”<sup>97</sup>

None of the stockmen gave an unqualified endorsement of the FA. In 1918, any illusions they had about a government regulated livestock industry disappeared rapidly. There was a

growing sense among the stockmen that government regulation may not be in their best interest and that the government would possibly favor its much larger constituents, the consumers rather than the producers.

Acting on the FTC report, the attorney general sought to indict the packers before a grand jury. He failed to do so in Chicago, but as his second attempt in New York was underway the packers agreed to sign a consent decree in August 1920. The packers had let Palmer know that they desired to present their side to him, and in the talks that followed they agreed to a negotiated settlement known as the consent decree. The packers agreed to the decree before the hearings had begun. The packers did not admit guilt but agreed to “get out of all food businesses, except meat packing, within two years.”<sup>98</sup> This answered the most grievous, even though unfounded, charge that the packers were gaining control of the global food supply. The decree stated that the packers had to sell “all of their holdings in public stockyards,” “all their interest in stockyard railroads and terminals,” “all their interest in market newspapers,” to “forever dissociate themselves from the retail meat business,” and they were also forbidden to conspire, form monopolies, or “engage in unfair or unlawful practices,” among other things. According to the decree, they did not have to give up their cold storage facilities or refrigerated railroad cars. In fact, the packers remained in control of their distribution system, even though “the FTC considered [it] to be the key monopolizing device.” The packers accepted the decree because the government investigations were costly, there was a possibility that they would be found guilty of collusion to suppress livestock prices and face stiffer penalties than those imposed by the decree, and the negative publicity was bad for their public image.<sup>99</sup>

In the face of this negative publicity, the packers again stepped up efforts to win the hearts and minds of the western stockmen. Between July and August 1919, at the urging of Wilson and

Co. head, Thomas E. Wilson, they reorganized the American Meat Packers Association and renamed it the Institute of American Meat Packers, with one of the purposes being to foster better relations within the livestock industry.<sup>100</sup> The IAMP also hired Pendleton Dudley, a public relations guru to help them revamp the image of meat packers.<sup>101</sup> In 1920, the Institute of American Meat Packers launched a monthly livestock journal specifically for stockmen, called the *Meat and Live Stock Digest*. In its first issue, it featured an article entitled, “Casement Condemns Federal Trade Report.”<sup>102</sup> The IAMP even created a “committee to confer with livestock producers.” Packer outreach focused on a few specific themes—the packer’s minimal profit<sup>103</sup>; that the packers are essentially marketing agents for the producer; and that the entire meat industry was under attack from anti-meat propaganda, which was hurting producers.<sup>104</sup> The packers, through the *Meat Digest*, provided market information and expert advice on stock raising and selling.

Swift and Co. began an “educational advertising campaign” in March 1918. Under L. D. H. Weld of its Commercial Research Department, Swift created many different ads for each year, in order to “explain the conduct of its business and its relation to both producer and consumer.”<sup>105</sup> For 1918, Swift had over fifty different advertisements that it placed in various publications. Some ads were geared toward agricultural publications, while others were for the general public and had “different wording” than those for farmers. Some of the ad titles were, “to the American People,” “it cost the average family less than ten cents per week for packer’s profit in 1917,” the not so subtle, “there is no monopoly,” “How the armies’ need for meat was answered,” and “are you open-minded?” Swift continued its educational advertising for years thereafter.<sup>106</sup>

The packer’s propaganda was effective as measured by the response of the ANLSA. In 1919, E. L. Burke presented the Report of the Market Committee which was primarily concerned with the effectiveness of the packer ad campaign on public opinion. The ANLSA was concerned



enough to issue a statement to be placed in the newspapers of the US. It read that the ANLSA “views with serious concern the extraordinary campaign of concentrated power and concentrated profits which the packers have been and still are conducting to influence American public opinion.”<sup>107</sup> The ANLSA did not have the financial reserves to seriously compete with the packers in the realm of public relations.

Many within the ANLSA switched sides during the war on the packers, possibly swayed by the packer’s arguments. At the 1917 ANLSA convention, Ricqels defended the big packers, stating that the market committee’s “contact with the owners of these large packing houses and market establishments gave us a better insight into their point of view, and a better realization of the kind of men they are. We found (this is my personal opinion) that they are not much different from ourselves, and that they thought about a great many things in largely the same way. So, familiarity with the people and the subject naturally led in the direction of a conference.” Ricqels also believed that conditions at stockyards had changed for the better and took the stockyard owners at their word that they would make “many improvements.” Ricqels even urged packer ownership of retail shops.<sup>108</sup> But other speakers severely criticized Ricqels for his faith in the packers. Secretary of Agriculture Houston accused him of showing only part of the facts.<sup>109</sup> At the same time, Ricqels also announced his resignation from the market committee.

Expert ranch manager Murdo MacKenzie, of the Matador Ranch in Texas, also defended the packers. MacKenzie, a former president of the ANLSA, was eminent among cattlemen. Not only did he transform the Matador into a profitable business, but he led livestock lobbying efforts in Washington DC. Theodor Roosevelt even quipped that MacKenzie was the “most influential of the western cattle growers.”<sup>110</sup> MacKenzie never bitterly opposed to the packers as some other Texas stockmen did. In 1910, he wrote a letter to J. Ogden Armour stating that “I am very anxious

that the country should know how the stockmen of the West feel toward the packers. Personally, I feel that our business is a mutual one; without the cattlemen, the packers could not keep on their business and without the packers, we would have a hard job to dispose of our product, and I therefore feel we must stand or fall together.”<sup>111</sup> Shortly after this, he spent eight years in Brazil, managing the Brazil Land, Cattle, and Packing Company, one of the largest ranches in the world, before returning to the states to take up residence in Chicago. In 1920, at the ANLSA convention, MacKenzie explained that in Brazil, the size of the ranch compelled him to “secure packing houses,” which brought him into close contact with the big packers. This contact brought with it an understanding of their business and he defended their ownership of refrigerated railroad cars and storage facilities. From 1919 to 1922, he served as an advisor to Thomas E. Wilson for the purpose of creating a better understanding between producers and packers. He was chairman of the committee on improved livestock breeding for the IAMP.<sup>112</sup> He also pointed to stockyards owned by packers in which the local stockmen were well pleased. Historian J’Nell Pate confirms MacKenzie’s statement in her study of the Ft. Worth, Texas stockyards.<sup>113</sup> Burke called MacKenzie’s speech “irrelevant,” which prompted a heated exchange between the two men. President Kendrick then ruled Mackenzie “out of order.”<sup>114</sup>

Dan Casement also changed his mind on the packers. As mentioned previously, Casement engaged in dialogue with the packers in 1916. By 1919, he desired cooperation with the packers—thus committing what he called the “rankest kind of heresy.” He changed his mind because he believed that the lesson of the war was cooperation, that the meat packers superbly fulfilled their patriotic duty of supplying the soldiers with meat during the war, and that the big meat packers were “eager to openly explain and defend their position.” Even though he admitted that the packers had conspired to keep prices low in the past, he believed that they had become “enlightened” by

their wartime experience and would not do that again. He thought both producers and packers exaggerated, and it was time to lay old animosities aside and work for their mutual benefit.<sup>115</sup>

Those stockmen like Casement and MacKenzie who were accused of being on the packers' side shared a number of opinions. They believed that the consent decree was an acceptable response to the FTC report, that legislation on the packers should wait, and that no government supervision of stockyards or packers was necessary. Former governor of Colorado, former president of Colorado Stock Growers Association, and current member of the ANLSA executive committee, Elias Ammons thought that Attorney General Palmer made a "fair agreement with the packers" in the consent decree. He wanted to see how it worked before passing any legislation on the packers.<sup>116</sup> In addition to individuals, several livestock associations including the Arizona Stock Growers Association (ASGA), the Colorado Stock Growers Association, and various county associations thought the same way.

Stockmen in this camp tended to oppose government regulation of the packers and even wanted to expand the packer's vertical integration. Primarily they opposed the creation of a government "bureau" to oversee the packing industry. Many who opposed it tended to be from states with National Forests and compared federal oversight of packers to their experience under the Forest Service. Governor Ammons detested the Forest Service and said that they had arbitrary power and that they abused it. Many also probably agreed with Dr. Gotthelf who claimed to speak on behalf of the stockmen about the FA when he stated that "we feel that our livestock industry was injured by war time regulations."<sup>117</sup> Some stockmen, like President of ASGA Mullen, opposed it in terms of general principles, stating that "I was always against the regulation of any private business." However, these stockmen did not necessarily oppose packer legislation, they opposed federal control of the packers. They also tended to fear that regulation of one branch of the industry

would lead to regulation of the entire industry. Because their views coincided with that of the packers, they were, not surprisingly, labeled by other stockmen as working on behalf of the packers.<sup>118</sup> They also tended to favor packer ownership of retail markets, in the belief that this would allow the packers to sell beef at a lower price and pay growers and feeders more due to the cost savings of vertical integration.

On the other side, there were the stockmen who wanted legislation with some form of regulation of packers. Some of the vocal supporters of government supervision had previously served in the meat division of the FA, such as E. L. Burke, Lasater, and Heard. Burke said that it was a question of having the government act as umpire or having the packers make the rules. Like Kendrick, they thought that the consent decree was only as good as the judge enforcing it. Therefore, he wanted to get the propositions of the decree into law in order to make them permanent.<sup>119</sup> Many of this group also wanted cooperation with packers, but only after legislation that allowed for government supervision of livestock markets was in place. Many probably shared Burke's sentiments when he complained of "improper interference" within the ANLSA by "organized interests," and the packers' "persistent and insidious interference" in producer associations.<sup>120</sup> President Kendrick agreed wholeheartedly with Burke and called packer "intervention" in ANLSA conventions an "irritant" that had "been tolerated too long."<sup>121</sup>

Other livestock associations were split over regulation as well. In 1920, the Kansas Livestock Association held an unprecedented formal debate on the question of federal regulation of the packing industry. The KLA invited two speakers from the Institute of American Meat Packers, the packer's trade association, and had two leading stockmen argue in favor of regulation. The IAMP sent former Yale economics professor and current manager of commercial research at Swift, L. H. D. Weld and Col. R. F. Eagle who worked for Wilson and Co. Speaking for the

packers, Weld defended the principles of limited government, stating that “if the clumsy finger of the government were protruded into the machinery of the packing industry, it is difficult to imagine what might take place.” Perhaps recalling some of the problems with the FA, Weld described government bureaucracy as inefficient and even incompetent. Weld asked his audience to “imagine an inexperienced political appointee down in Washington being given the power to tell us what we may do and what we may not do. Just think what tremendous confidence that would inspire in the livestock industry if you only had some politicians down in Washington telling us how we could conduct our business. Government interference would necessarily clog our sales machinery.” He stated that “cooperation and mutual understanding is what is needed to restore confidence among producers rather than useless laws to cover fancied evils.” The other IAMP representative, Col. Eagle, appealed to the stockmen’s patriotism to support cooperation. Eagle was referring to contemporary anxiety about socialism when he explained that cooperation was the best way to prevent America from headed down a “radical path.” He told the Kansas stockmen that the newly created Institute of American Meat Packers “invites cooperation” and wants “mutual understanding.”

Representing the KLA, John Edwards and Joe Mercer opposed the packers. John Edwards, a renowned breeder, popular speaker, and former president of the KLA was more radical than Mercer. He said that “supply and demand are by-products of the packing house and made only for public consumption.” Edwards thought that food retailers and purveyors “should be a public utility because food is a public necessity.”

Joseph Mercer was more understanding of the packers even though he still desired legislation. Mercer was the state sanitary commissioner, secretary of the KLA, and a member of the ANLSA’s committee on sanitary boards. Mercer said he would not verbally abuse the packers,

because he knew some of them well, so well that he referred to them as “Tom” and “Louis.” He explained that he did not want government ownership of packers, merely regulation and he thought that this oversight would be good for packers too.<sup>122</sup>

The issue of packer legislation continued to divide the ANLSA. At the ANLSA executive committee meeting in Denver, Colorado, in January 1919, the Montana Stock Growers Association sent a telegram containing its recently passed resolution that it would be “compelled to withdraw [its] membership” from the ANLSA if it endorsed the Sims Bill, which would give the federal government ownership of the packers’ “rolling stock,” “cold storage,” and “freezing plants.”<sup>123</sup> The Montana association was “opposed to government ownership or operation of livestock facilities,” but it did endorse government supervision. H. A. Jastro, longtime member of the market committee, threatened to quit the committee because of the letter. His colleagues convinced him to remain.<sup>124</sup>

Later that year, evidence of more opposition surfaced. In the summer of 1919, Congress considered the Kenyon and Kendrick Bills, proposed by progressive Iowa Republican William Kenyon and Democrat Senator John Kendrick. This bill would license packers and divest them of ownership of stockyards and refrigerator cars. Jastro and Burke, representing the market committee, wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry which was conducting hearings on the bill, and told him that “we deplore the recent action of those livestock producers who have passed resolutions condemning certain features of the proposed bill.”<sup>125</sup> Soon Kenyon’s bill was merged with Senator John Kendrick’s bill and the new bill replaced regulation with licensing.

In January 1920, as Congress considered the Kenyon and Kendrick Bill, the ANLSA held its twenty-third annual meeting in Spokane, Washington. This was a bitterly divided convention.

President of the ANLSA and US Senator John Kendrick defended his joint bill with Senator Kenyon, which would create a three-man commission with “supervisory powers” over packers, stockyards, and storage facilities.<sup>126</sup> Referring to his bill, Kendrick told the assembled stockmen that he and Sen. Kenyon “offer no radical experiment. We propose no revolutionary change. Our plan is the very essence of conservatism; for it aims only at the restoration in the American livestock market of the free and unfettered application of the law of supply and demand.” He said that he did not want price fixing by the government or by packers, but a “free American market.” He also hinted at class issues within the ANLSA stating that “we are not so much concerned about the men who are shipping in large numbers—men who may perhaps be known personally to the large buyers, and who stand on a level with them . . . we are concerned for the shipper of only a few head at a time. We are concerned with the man who sends one animal to the stock yard.”<sup>127</sup>

Tension boiled under the surface of the convention. Some stockmen, including Elias Ammons, believed that the convention was rigged in favor of those who favored government regulation. This might explain why some men, opposed to regulation, slipped in their opinions in speeches on unrelated topics. Frank D. Tomson gave a speech on “Beef—Where does it come from and who eats it?” In it, he discussed the importance of purebred cattle in increasing the income of the producer as well as the importance of breeder associations. However, during his speech he burst out that “I am happy to say at this time—particularly at this time—that the purebred cattle associations have had very hearty cooperation from those who represent the packing interests. I am happy to make that acknowledgment at this time.” Similarly, yet cryptically, John P. Klug, president of the Colorado Stock Growers Association stated that “there are interests that cannot exist without ours, and we should have a hard time getting along without theirs. Therefore

we must cooperate with those interests, and try to get along with them in peace and discuss our problems that come up from time to time.”<sup>128</sup>

W. S. Whinnery of Colorado asked the convention if MacKenzie could read a letter he received the previous night from Thomas E. Wilson, president of Wilson and Co. and president of the IAMP. Whinnery then said that “I wish to testify to my regard and respect, good-will and friendship, for Mr. MacKenzie and Mr. Wilson.” In the letter, Wilson explained the purpose of the IAMP, that it was to better serve the industry as a whole “and it might be a means of closer working with the producers.” MacKenzie affirmed his trust in Wilson.<sup>129</sup>

The last day of the convention witnessed a heated contest between the two sides. The resolutions committee could not agree on the text of a resolution regarding the packer legislation and instead issued a majority report and a minority report. The majority report called for “federal legislation regulating the packers, stockyards, and commission men” while the minority report stated that “whenever legislation is found necessary” that Congress does not grant “any arbitrary or discretionary power to bureaus or officials.”<sup>130</sup> Author of the minority report, Dr. Wilson echoed the anti-legislation producers, stating that he wanted the attorney general to have a chance to “carry out this decree in good faith on the part of all parties entering into it” and to wait to enact legislation. He wanted to “keep business away from bureaus” and thought that the K-K bill makes business subject to government.<sup>131</sup> Whinnery and the CSGA unanimously favored the minority report. Whinnery said that the agitation had been bad for the small producers of Colorado. Another committee was quickly established and worked out a compromise resolution, but it was, in essence, a restatement of the majority resolution. To this, Dr. Wilson said that they should “try to heal all this disturbance that has existed between us and those who should be our friends,” meaning the



packers. He relented to the compromise resolution and it was carried, but not without many cries of “Question! Question!” from the audience that went unanswered.<sup>132</sup>

Months later, at a congressional hearing on the K-K bills, a number of stockmen expressed the feeling that the ANLSA leadership had suppressed the voice of the majority of producers. Charles P. Mullen, president of the Arizona Stock Growers Association and executive committee member of the ANLSA, thought that the leadership of ANLSA did not allow the true sentiment of the producers to be heard at Spokane and “gave out a false impression to the general public.” Ammons also remembered that “there was a great element there that was opposed to it [the Kenyon-Kendrick Bills], and they even carried it into the election of officers.” In discussing the majority resolution explained above, Ammons stated that “more than a majority were against this in any form.”<sup>133</sup> Stockmen on the other side, like A. C. Williams of Texas thought that they were doing the work of the packers. He said, “I have been told that there are some men in this audience who came here with the hope of being able to control the action of this convention to suit the wishes of the packers.”<sup>134</sup>

At the next meeting in El Paso, Texas in 1921, divisions were still evident along the same lines. However, Kendrick reminded the ANLSA members that “we are avoiding, as far as we can, any spirit of controversy today, with a view of getting through.” The major theme of the convention was for greater organization and a stronger sense of unity within the ANLSA, and many speeches were given on those topics. President Kendrick complained that the market committee had the full support of the ANLSA when it was created, but that interest has been allowed to lag. He went on to say that since then we have “many of those who had supported the movement—apparently in good faith—had, like Saul of Tarsus, a revelation and changed their fronts.”<sup>135</sup> W. W. Turney, past president of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, spoke of the importance of

uniting “cowman with cowman, instead of weakening ourselves by joining hands with somebody who will never in good faith unite with us.” Referring to the resolution on packer legislation from the previous convention, he said that if we “pass resolutions by a majority vote, it ought to mean something.”<sup>136</sup> When MacKenzie asserted that he wanted what was best for the producers, but someone shouted at him “best for the packers,” Fred Bixby, a large California rancher, called out Mullen, Ammons, MacKenzie by name and said that they should remember that they are producers.<sup>137</sup>

In August 1921 President Harding signed into law the Packers and Stockyards Act. It made the livestock pools illegal and allowed for the supervision of the stockyards by the secretary of agriculture. The secretary was given power to “issue a temporary injunction,” subject to court approval. Disobedience to the law carried maximum penalties of six months in jail or a \$10,000 fine. Stockyard users had to be “registered with the secretary” in order to conduct business at the stockyard. Finally, the secretary of agriculture was given the power to determine “rates of charge” at the stockyard.<sup>138</sup> The act was essentially what the market committee wanted. Thomas E. Wilson told the stockmen that the packers were ready to cooperate in the enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act, which garnered much applause. Wilson hoped the act would usher in a “new era of closer cooperation.”<sup>139</sup>

In fact, after the Packers and Stockyards Act was passed the producers quickly made peace with the packers and desired to cooperate with them. The governor of Colorado and the mayor of Colorado Springs both noted the “spirit of getting together” between packers and producers at the ANLSA convention.<sup>140</sup> Burke remarked that “cooperation seems to be in the air.”<sup>141</sup> Retiring president Kendrick, upon introducing Thomas E. Wilson said that “from this day on it is my hope

that the two interests will work out every common problem in which they are jointly interested, not by way of antagonistic effort, but by joint and cooperative effort.”<sup>142</sup>

This spirit of cooperation was embodied in the creation of the National Live Stock and Meat Board (NLSMB), whose purpose was to boost meat consumption. Even before the Packers and Stockyards Act became law, representatives of the ANLSA, other livestock associations, and the IAMP had met and jointly created the NLSMB. When the NLSMB was presented for acceptance by the ANLSA, Dan Casement was the first to move for the ANLSA to accept it, which was quickly seconded. Casement said that “the advantages of this plan are so obvious and . . . the interests of those who propose to cooperate in it are so mutual” that it should be accepted without delay. Vice President O’Donel said the slogan of the new Board should be “red meat makes a red-blooded American,” which was based on what Wilson had called producers.

Through the organization of the market committee, the producers forced the packers to work with them on industry-wide issues. The ANLSA seemed to think that the packers would only respect it if it had teeth. Calling for an investigation into the packing industry and supporting federal legislation against the packers was how it demonstrated its power to the packers. In the process, the ANLSA nearly divided on the issue of government regulation. All of the producers of the ANLSA wanted cooperation, but they disagreed on when it was appropriate. Some believed the consent decree sufficiently tamed the packers, while others wanted government supervision. Once the legislation was passed, all sides were eager to put the war behind them and cooperate for the good of the industry.

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<sup>16</sup> Michael Carolan, *The Sociology of Food and Agriculture* (London: Routledge, 2016), 32–33; Casement to McManus, July 15, 1916, Box 4 folder “Publicity Files, July 1916–Nov. 1916,” Swift and Company Records, Chicago History Museum, Illinois. Hereafter cited as Swift Records.

<sup>17</sup> Carolan, *Sociology of Food*, 36.

<sup>18</sup> Casement to McManus, July 15, 1916, Box 4 Folder “Publicity Files, July 1916–Nov. 1916,” Swift Records; Carolan, 36.

<sup>19</sup> James E. Sherow, *The Chisholm Trail: Joseph McCoy’s Great Gamble* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018), 8.

<sup>20</sup> Sherow, *The Chisholm Trail*, 19–20; Clemen, *American Livestock*, 173.

<sup>21</sup> Sherow, *Chisholm Trail*, 265–8.

<sup>22</sup> Clair Wilcox, *Competition and Monopoly in American Industry* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970 (1940), 182.

<sup>23</sup> E. L. Burke, ANLSA convention 1916, p. 77

<sup>24</sup> Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 102.

<sup>25</sup> Yeager, *Competition and Regulation*, 158; Peter H. Smith, *Politics and Beef in Argentina: Patterns of Conflict and Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 75–78. The US export trade decreased markedly after 1900 as American demand increased. England had also imposed an immediate slaughter order on American cattle imports because they allegedly carried pleuro-pneumonia. See Justin Kastner, Douglas Powell, Terry Crowley, and Karen Huff, “Scientific Conviction amidst Scientific Controversy in the Transatlantic Livestock and Meat Trade,” *Endeavor* 29 no. 2 (2007): 78–83.

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- <sup>26</sup> Rudolf A. Clemen, *American Livestock and Meat Industry* (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1923), 769.
- <sup>27</sup> E. L. Burke quoted by ANLSA Convention 1921, 197
- <sup>28</sup> Yeager, *Competition and Regulation*, 203; G. O. Virtue, “The Meat Packing Investigation,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1920) 627.
- <sup>29</sup> Clemen, *American Livestock*, 769.
- <sup>30</sup> ANLSA Convention 1916, p. 23–24.
- <sup>31</sup> ANLSA Convention 1916, p. 21–22.
- <sup>32</sup> ANLSA Convention 1916, p. 21–22.
- <sup>33</sup> ANLSA Convention 1916, p. 20; Charles E. Ball, *Building the Beef Industry: A Century of Commitment* (Saratoga, WY: Saratoga Publishing Group, 1998), 56.
- <sup>34</sup> ANLSA Convention, 1916, 20.
- <sup>35</sup> Wood, *Kansas Beef Industry*, 172–174.
- <sup>36</sup> ANLSA 1916, de Ricqles, 73.
- <sup>37</sup> ANLSA Convention 1916, p. 21–22.
- <sup>38</sup> Heard, ANLSA Convention 1917, 18.
- <sup>39</sup> Memorandum of remarks by Dwight B. Heard no date Box 4 folder “Publicity File, March 1913-June 1916,” Swift Records.
- <sup>40</sup> Burke, ANLSA Convention 1916, 80.
- <sup>41</sup> Heard, ANLSA Convention 1917, 23.
- <sup>42</sup> Chaplin to A. D. White, January 8, 1916, Box 4 folder “Publicity File, March 1913-June 1916,” Swift Records.

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<sup>43</sup> Chaplin to A. D. White, May 27, 1916, Box 4 folder “Publicity File, March 1913-June 1916,” Swift Records.

<sup>44</sup> George Swift to Arthur D. White, August 29, 1916, Box 4 folder “Publicity File, March 1913-June 1916,” Swift Records.

<sup>45</sup> J. M. Chaplin to J. H. Mercer, May 22, 1916, Box 4 folder “Publicity file, March 1913-June 1916,” Swift Records; J. M. Chaplin to Louis Swift, May 22, 1916, Box 4 folder “Publicity file, March 1913-June 1916,” Swift Records.

<sup>46</sup> Dan Casement to R. C. McManus, July 15, 1916; R. C. McManus to Casement, July 25, 1916; R. J. McManus to Casement, August 16, 1916; Box 4 folder “Publicity Files, July 1916-Nov. 1916,” Swift Records. Casement’s steers were of the highest quality.

<sup>47</sup> Casement to McManus, July 15, 1916, Box 4 folder “Publicity Files, July 1916-Nov. 1916,” Swift Records.

<sup>48</sup> McManus to Casement, July 25, 1916, Box 4 Folder “Publicity Files, July 1916-Nov. 1916,” Swift Records.

<sup>49</sup> Louis Swift to R. C. McManus, August 9, 1916, Box 4 folder “Publicity Files, July 1916-Nov. 1916,” Swift Records.

<sup>50</sup> A. D. White to McManus, August 15, 1916, Box 4 Folder “Publicity Files, July 1916-Nov. 1916,” Swift Records.

<sup>51</sup> McManus to Casement, August 16, 1916, Box 4 Folder “Publicity Files, July 1916-Nov. 1916,” Swift Records.

<sup>52</sup> Williams, *Economics of the Livestock Industry*, 143–42.

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- <sup>53</sup> Lewis Corey, *Meat and Man: A Study of Monopoly, Unionism and Food Policy*. (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1949), 80.
- <sup>54</sup> Yeager, *Competition and Regulation*, 128.
- <sup>55</sup> Memo January 7, 1916, Box 4 folder “Publicity File, March 1913-June 1916,” Swift Records.
- <sup>56</sup> “Swift and Company’s Relation to Live Stock Raiser and Retail Meat Dealer,” no date, Box 4 folder “Publicity File, March 1913-June 1916,” Swift Records.
- <sup>57</sup> Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 21–9, 104.
- <sup>58</sup> Burke, ANLSA convention 1916, 75.
- <sup>59</sup> U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Agriculture and Forestry. *Government Control of the Meat-Packing Industry: Hearings before the Committee on Agriculture and Forestry on S. 5305*, 65<sup>th</sup> Cong., 3<sup>rd</sup> sess., 1919, 1060.
- <sup>60</sup> ANLSA Convention 1917, 20.
- <sup>61</sup> Market Committee Bulletin, no. 1, June 1, 1916, John B. Kendrick Papers, American Heritage Center, Laramie, Wyoming. Hereafter cited as Kendrick Papers.
- <sup>62</sup> Senate Committee, *Government Control of the Meat Packing Industry*, 1488.
- <sup>63</sup> U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Agriculture. *Meat-packer Legislation: Hearings Before the Committee on Agriculture*. 66th Cong., 2nd sess., 1920, 325–6.
- <sup>64</sup> Senate Committee, *Government Control of the Meat Packing Industry*, 1060.
- <sup>65</sup> Senate Committee, *Government Control of the Meat Packing Industry*, 1153–6; 1701.
- <sup>66</sup> “T. W. Tomlinson,” *The Producer*, December 1928, 3.
- <sup>67</sup> Senate Committee, *Government Control of the Meat Packing Industry*, 1701, 1708.

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<sup>68</sup> ANLSA Convention 1919, 117.

<sup>69</sup> Market Committee Bulletin, no. 4, November 8, 1916, Kendrick Papers.

<sup>70</sup> *Marketing and Farm Credits: A Collection of Papers and Documents Read at the Fourth Annual Session of the National Conference on the Marketing of Live Stock* (Madison, WI: National Conference on the Marketing of Live Stock, 1917), 1.

<sup>71</sup> Senate Committee, *Government Control of the Meat Packing Industry*, 817–8, 1489.

<sup>72</sup> Senate Committee, *Government Control of the Meat Packing Industry*, 819.

<sup>73</sup> Burke ANLSA Convention, 1917, 67.

<sup>74</sup> Federal Trade Commission, *Food Investigation: Report of the Federal Trade Commission on the Meat Packing Industry, Summary and Part I* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1919), 23–4.

<sup>75</sup> Robert Mitchell Aduddell, “The Meat Packing Industry and the Consent Decree, 1920-1956.” PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1971, 49–50.

<sup>76</sup> Robert M. Aduddell and Louis P. Cain, “Public Policy toward ‘The Greatest Trust in the World,’” *Business History Review* Vol. 55, no. 2 (Summer, 1981), 220.

<sup>77</sup> Federal Trade Commission, *Food Investigation*, 49–50.

<sup>78</sup> Robert Mitchell Aduddell, “The Meat Packing Industry and the Consent Decree, 1920-1956.” PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1971, 60–61. Jimmy Skaggs, in *Prime Cut*, 107, gives the impression that there was no truth to the FTC claims. He does not, for example, note that the packers held down livestock prices.

<sup>79</sup> Federal Trade Commission, *Food Investigation*, 25.

<sup>80</sup> Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 106.



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<sup>81</sup> Virtue, “Meat Packing Investigation,” 677.”

<sup>82</sup> David Kennedy, *Over Here*, 120.

<sup>83</sup> *Food Conservation Act*, Public Law 41, *U. S. Statutes at Large* 53 (1917): 276.

<sup>84</sup> Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table*, 138–9.

<sup>85</sup> George H. Nash, *Life of Herbert Hoover: Master of Emergencies, 1917–1918* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1996), 283.

<sup>86</sup> Burke, ANLSA Convention, 1918, 47.

<sup>87</sup> Nash, *Life of Herbert Hoover*, 287, 284.

<sup>88</sup> Nash, *Life of Herbert Hoover*, 284–295.

<sup>89</sup> ANLSA Convention 1918, 45.

<sup>90</sup> Nash, *Life of Herbert Hoover*, 295.

<sup>91</sup> ANLSA Convention 1920, p 22.

<sup>92</sup> ANLSA Convention 1918, p 17.

<sup>93</sup> ANLSA Convention 1918, p 81–2.

<sup>94</sup> Joseph Cotton, ANLSA Convention 1918, 90–1.

<sup>95</sup> “Dan Casement of Manhattan Sees some of Packers Side” *Hutchinson (Kansas) News*, Feb 21, 1919.

<sup>96</sup> Hagenbarth, ANLSA Convention 1918, 30–1.

<sup>97</sup> Lasater, ANLSA Convention 1918, 110–6.

<sup>98</sup> John T. Schlebecker, *Cattle Raising on the Plains, 1900–1961* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 77.

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<sup>99</sup> Robert M. Aduddell and Louis P. Cain, “Public Policy toward ‘The Greatest Trust in the World,’” *Business History Review* Vol. 55, no. 2 (Summer, 1981), 236; Virtue, “Meat Packing Investigation,” 678; Clemen, *American Livestock*, 783–4.

<sup>100</sup> “Wallace hopes Cooperation in Meat Industry will grow,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, March 1923; Thomas E. Wilson, “The Future of the Institute of the American Meat Packers,” (pamphlet, 1922 or 1923), 7, Secretary of Commerce Files, Box 284 folder “Institute of American Meat Packers, 1921-1927,” Herbert Hoover Papers, Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa. Hereafter cited as Hoover Papers. Jimmy Skaggs in *Prime Cut*, 129, also notes that the packer trade organization increased efforts to resist government intervention but refers to it as the American Meat Packers Association, not realizing that its name was changed to the IAMP. The name change is significant because it marks a new outlook for packers—they wanted greater cooperation with producers.

<sup>101</sup> Scott Cutlip, *The Unseen Power: Public Relations. A History* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), 99. Cutlip credits Dudley more than anyone else with revamping the public image of meat packers. He downplays the role of Thomas Wilson in this public relations coup. After all, it was Wilson who hired Dudley in the first place—Dudley implemented Wilson’s vision. Cutlip also mistakenly refers to the IAMP as the AMI.

<sup>102</sup> *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, August 1920.

<sup>103</sup> The packer’s minimal profits were and still are a disputed topic. “Profit” in this case is measured in terms of the money the packers make per hundredweight while the FTC and other government regulatory agencies have said that the Packers method of figuring profit is misleading.

<sup>104</sup> “Institute of American Meat Packers,” *National Provisioner*, August 13, 1921.

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- <sup>105</sup> “Swift and Company Publicity,” September 14, 1919, Box 7 Swift Records.
- <sup>106</sup> Chicago History Museum, Swift Box 5 folder "Advertisements, 1918," Swift Records.
- <sup>107</sup> ANLSA Convention, E. L. Burke “Report of Marketing Committee” 1919, 143.
- <sup>108</sup> Ricqels, ANLSA Convention 1917, 76–9.
- <sup>109</sup> ANLSA Convention 1917, 81, 95.
- <sup>110</sup> Leland Turner, “Caprock Chronicles: Murdo MacKenzie one of most influential of Western Cattle Growers,” *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, October 22, 2016.
- <sup>111</sup> William M. Pearce, *The Matador Land and Cattle Company* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 102.
- <sup>112</sup> C. L. Douglas, *Cattle Kings of Texas* (Austin, Texas: State House Press, 1989), 242; “Urges use of Purebred Sires to Remedy Breeding Situation,” *Live Stock and Meat Digest*, September 1921.
- <sup>113</sup> Murdo Mackenzie, “Meat Packing Legislation,” ANLSA Convention 1920, 38–46; J’Nell L. Pate, *Livestock Legacy: The Fort Worth Stockyards, 1887–1987* (Texas A & M University Press, 1988).
- <sup>114</sup> E. L. Burke, “Report of the Market Committee” ANLSA Convention, 1920, 48.
- <sup>115</sup> “Dan Casement of Manhattan Sees some of Packers Side” *Hutchinson (Kansas) News*, Feb 21, 1919.
- <sup>116</sup> House Committee, *Meat-Packer Legislation*, 1368.
- <sup>117</sup> House Committee, *Meat-Packer Legislation*, 1344.
- <sup>118</sup> House Committee, *Meat-Packer Legislation*, 1425.
- <sup>119</sup> Kendrick Address, ANLSA Convention 1920, p. 22.

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<sup>120</sup> ANLSA Convention 1921, 164.

<sup>121</sup> “The Uninvited Guest,” no date, but about a month after the 1921 Convention, Box 61 folder “Packing House Legislation,” Kendrick Papers.

<sup>122</sup> “The Packer-Stockman Debate,” *Kansas Stockman*, March 1, 1919.

<sup>123</sup> “Bill to Curb Packers: Provides Federal Control of Rolling Stock and Storage Plants,” *New York Times*, Dec 11, 1918.

<sup>124</sup> Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of ANLSA, Box 122 folder “Committee Files: Executive Committee Proceedings, 1918–1923,” National Cattlemen’s Association Records, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie. Hereafter cited as ANLSA Records.

<sup>125</sup> ANLSA Convention 1920, 58 Jastro and Burke on behalf of Market Committee to Sen. Asle J. Gronna, August 23, 1919.

<sup>126</sup> “Preset new Bill for Meat control: Senators Kenyon and Kendrick Offer Measure providing Registration instead of Licensing,” *New York Times*, Jan 6, 1920.

<sup>127</sup> Kendrick Address, ANLSA Convention 1920, 23.

<sup>128</sup> Frank D. Tomson, “Beef—Where does it come from and who eats it?” ANLSA Convention 1920, 66, 69; Address of Mr. John P. Klug of the Colorado Stock Growers Assoc., ANLSA Convention 1920, 104–5.

<sup>129</sup> ANLSA Convention 1920, 117.

<sup>130</sup> ANLSA Convention 1921, 156.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 158–60.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>133</sup> House Committee, *Meat-Packer Legislation*, 1425, 1373.

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<sup>134</sup> ANLSA Convention 1921, 110.

<sup>135</sup> ANLSA Convention 1922, 22.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>138</sup> *Packers and Stockyards Act*, Public Law 51, *U. S. Statutes at Large* 42 (1923): 159–69.

<sup>139</sup> ANLSA Convention 1922, 39, 46.

<sup>140</sup> ANLSA Convention 1922, 8.

<sup>141</sup> ANLSA Convention 1922, 48.

<sup>142</sup> ANLSA Convention 1922, 38.

## **Chapter 3 - Meat Retail Reform: Packers form an Uneasy Alliance with Producers**

In the Fall of 1919, the Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) sent delegates to Chicago and Washington, DC to get first-hand information about the livestock situation. The delegation consisted of about forty-five of the leading cattlemen of Kansas, including rancher Dan Casement, former governor Walter Stubbs, and KLA secretary Joseph Mercer. In Chicago, the big packers explained to them that the federal government was responsible for low cattle prices. When in Washington, DC, the commission must have been somewhat swayed by packer arguments because it criticized the policies of the secretary of agriculture and the attorney general. Before leaving DC, the cattlemen went to dine at a local restaurant. The prices for beef were incredibly high and the quality was poor. John Edwards remarked that “thin slices of roast beef cost more in Washington . . . than a cow would cost in Kansas.” Many cattlemen ordered fish in protest and Walter Stubbs had soup. Edwards claimed that retailers marked up the price of beef by one hundred percent.<sup>143</sup> For many of the stockmen, this was their first real taste of the distribution problem; high prices and low quality at the retail end of the livestock hourglass. With lingering resentment over FA policies, cattlemen did not fully trust the government to solve the retail problem and instead looked to the big packers for leadership in lowering retail prices.

In the 1920s, producers collaborated with the big packers, even following their lead in reforming the distribution end of the meat industry. The issues surrounding high retail prices offer a window into the dynamics of this collaboration. Producers overcame their misgivings and decided to work with the packers in an associational arrangement known as the National Live Stock and Meat Board (NLSMB). Even before the creation of the Meat Board, producers wanted the big packers to enter the meat retail trade even though the packers did not want to, nor could

they because it was prohibited by the consent decree. Packers instead wanted to work with retailers and help them adopt more efficient and equitable practices. Packers relented to government grading of meat, which producers wanted, and used it as an opportunity to draw closer to producers. Even though the big packers openly manipulated livestock associations, leading livestock producers continued to collaborate with them even during the Supreme Court hearings on revising the consent decree. Historians of the meat industry have overlooked the way that packers ingratiated themselves with producers and the extent to which the packers had gained the confidence of producer associations.<sup>144</sup>

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the packers wanted to cooperate with the producers rather than continue the “war.” They finally got their wish with the creation of the National Live Stock and Meat Board, which was the embodiment of the new spirit of cooperation between packers and producers. The Meat Board owed much of its existence to the efforts of Thomas E. Wilson, president of Wilson packing company. Other packers like Swift understood the need for better relations with stockmen, but Wilson was its most active champion. He set about institutionalizing producer and packer cooperation in the Meat Board. The creation of the Meat Board marked a great coup for the packers, but it was won only with great effort.

In March 1919, Wilson was the first person in the industry to call for some cooperative venture like the Meat Board. He first made the appeal at the Kansas Livestock Association’s annual convention. At the end of the convention, Wilson invited the president of the KLA to get together five producers and asked the secretary of the KLA, Mercer, to gather representatives from other livestock groups to meet with the packers in Chicago. Reporter Bertram Fowler noted that the conference was “lively,” and that the producers were divided into factions. Some wanted “cooperation,” while others, led by ANLSA market committee member E. L. Burke and future

secretary of agriculture Henry C. Wallace did not. However, they nonetheless agreed to set up a “conference committee of the livestock and meat industry” made up of representatives of producers, packers, commission men, and the U.S. Bureau of Markets.<sup>145</sup>

On April 12, 1919, this conference committee met in Kansas City to discuss the enactment of Wilson’s proposed cooperative marketing association. The main committee was divided into three sub-committees which were further subdivided into producer’s committees and packers’ committees. The executive committee for the producers consisted of Henry C. Wallace, who was also secretary of the Corn Belt Meat Producers’ Association as well as editor of *Wallace’s Farmer*, as chairman; E. L. Burke, Joseph H. Mercer, and two others. The packers were represented by the heads of the major eponymous companies: J. Ogden Armour, Thomas E. Wilson, E. F. Swift, Edward Morris, E. A. Cudahy, Jr., Mr. Hormel, and one other. The task of the executive committee was to tackle large scale problems in the livestock industry as well as those issues not covered by the two other committees on distribution and advertising. The committee also sought to cooperate with the “various Farm Bureaus” because the Farm Bureaus shared similar goals: they were interested in supervision of stockyards as well as in cooperation with industry.<sup>146</sup>

Many producers were deeply suspicious of the packer’s motives and intentions. According to Fowler, this meeting turned into “a knock down and drag out battle between the two bitterly opposed factions” of those who wanted cooperation and those who did not.<sup>147</sup> Fowler described E. L. Burke and Henry C. Wallace as the leaders of the group that opposed cooperation with the packers. Indeed, Burke distrusted the packer’s idea for cooperation calling it “a thoroughly worked out plan” in which “the livestock producers would have held a minority vote.” Henry Wallace, for his part, was afraid that the packers would control the committee.<sup>148</sup> President Kendrick and the ANLSA market committee feared that the cooperative committee “might easily be used to block



legislation” so these men formed a separate “committee of fifteen” that consisted only of producers.

After several meetings with the packers, the new committee of fifteen found itself ineffective because it lacked any delegated authority and was short on funding. The committee understood the need for allying with a larger organization and so it “voted to turn over its functions to the National Farm Bureau Federation.”<sup>149</sup> The Farm Bureau was eager to demonstrate its usefulness to agriculture and therefore cooperated with these stockmen. In early October 1920, a number of stockmen attended the livestock marketing conference called by president James R. Howard of the Farm Bureau to look into the livestock distribution system. At this conference, those present authorized President Howard to appoint another committee of fifteen producers whose job it would be to “arrange for a careful investigation of the livestock industry and livestock marketing.”<sup>150</sup> After three months of deliberation, Howard appointed individuals to the committee including W. A. Cochel, of Kansas City, Missouri, who was the southwestern representative of the American Shorthorn Breeders Association; Charles E. Collins, a member of the ANLSA; J. B. Kendrick, president of the ANLSA; A. Sykes, president of the Corn Belt Meat Producers Association; and O. O. Wolf of Kansas, president of the Kansas Agricultural Conference. Interested in distribution, the committee specifically wanted to see if the commission system was economical and if its rates were reasonable.<sup>151</sup> The ANLSA gave its support to this committee at its 1921 convention.<sup>152</sup> In November 1921 the Farm Bureau committee issued its final report which called for the creation of the National Livestock Producers Association (NLPA), a cooperative marketing organization.<sup>153</sup> Stockmen could pay a fee to join and could sell their cattle through it. The ultimate goal of the organization was to stabilize livestock prices by controlling shipments.<sup>154</sup>

Meanwhile, other stockmen were promoting a movement to boost meat consumption. In December 1920, secretary Carmichael of the National Swine Growers Association called for an “Eat more Meat” conference to address low meat consumption in the U.S. From the livestock industry standpoint, the need was real, as Americans on average were eating two and a half pounds of beef and veal less than they had from 1915 to 1918.<sup>155</sup> The conference proposed to place a “per car tax on livestock traffic” that would be paid by buyers and sellers. The tax, presumably, would fund the advertising campaign. Commission men stated that the tax would not be collected by them and packers implied that they would not pay the tax. James Poole, editor of *The Producer* did not have high hopes for the conference when he stated that “practically nothing was accomplished other than the appointment of the usual committee to form a National Live Stock and Meat Council.”<sup>156</sup>

In January 1921 the packers attended a conference with President Howard and other Farm Bureau representatives. The big packers suggested that the Farm Bureau cooperate with “other agencies . . . for the purpose of stimulating meat consumption,” but at this point, President Howard was not interested and retorted that lowering the price of meat for the consumer would be better than promoting consumption.<sup>157</sup> However, later that year, the Farm Bureau did endorse this very idea in what would become the National Live Stock and Meat Board and even donated \$10,000 to it. The Farm Bureau maintained a permanent member on the Meat Board.<sup>158</sup>

A meeting in February 1921 between packers and producers did not bode well for any sort of understanding among livestock industry interests. Instead, discord reigned. The president of the St. Louis Livestock Exchange asserted that consumers were the victims of “profiteering retailers.” One of the purposes of the livestock exchanges was to “defend the livestock trade” so it makes sense that the St. Louis group would blame retailers. Livestock exchanges, which were voluntary

associations that existed at most stockyards, did not count retailers as members. Instead, their membership consisted of producers, packers, shippers, commission men, and bankers. In addition to defending the livestock industry they also lobbied for favorable legislation and maintained honest and ethical practices within the industry. John T. Russell, president of a national retail association, who was present must not have been pleased. Stockmen may have agreed with an article in *The Producer* that expressed suspicion about the packers' desire for "joint committees" and viewed the Eat more Meat campaign as packer propaganda. The conference ended when the few producers who were present, from the Farm Bureau and the Corn Belt Meat Producers refused to assent to any collection of fees at the stockyards. Thomas Wilson said he was "dumbfounded" by the actions of producers. The conference then referred the "Eat more Meat" campaign to the committee of fifteen.<sup>159</sup>

While producers had formed their own cooperative marketing committee with the creation of the NLPA and had spurned cooperative ventures with packers, the packers refused to give up hope of cooperating with producers, specifically the ANLSA. In a letter to the committee of fifteen, Thomas Wilson wrote that "the meat packing industry feels that it is high time to give the public correct information concerning the food value of meat." Wilson, frustrated with the lack of progress by previous committees and conferences, decided to force the issue. Not wanting to waste any more time, he wrote to the committee of fifteen that "we [the packers] feel free to request a definite answer at the earliest date" that would be convenient for the Live Stock Marketing Committee. If the committee was not interested in cooperation, then, he explained, that the IAMP would go ahead with its own program and cooperate with individual stockmen's associations.<sup>160</sup>

In 1921, opposition to cooperating with the packers to boost meat consumption began to thaw. A step in the direction toward cooperation with the packers came at the ANLSA convention

of January 1921. As livestock prices continued in their depressed state stockmen saw that retail prices of meat remained high. An ANLSA resolution declared that the “eat more meat” campaigns could do nothing so long as consumers could not afford to purchase meat, so it decided that either retail profits were excessive, or the present system of distribution was woefully inefficient. Although it supported a “municipal market” it also sought “to ascertain the attitude of the Chicago packers toward such proposal, and to seek their cooperation in promoting and advancing the system.”<sup>161</sup> Henry Wallace’s appointment as secretary of agriculture in March 1921 removed him from the fight against the big packers. He had been one of the greatest opponents of the packers and an obstacle to collaboration. Indeed, Wallace had feared that the packers would dominate any joint venture with producers.<sup>162</sup>

In late summer 1921, despite Wallace’s misgivings, the committee of fifteen wrote to Thomas Wilson that it was interested in helping with an “Eat more Meat” campaign, but that it lacked funds to do anything further. Stockmen may have felt more secure in cooperation at this time because of the working out and passage of the Packers and Stockyards Act, which regulated the packers to a degree. Wilson responded by suggesting that the funds for the campaign could be raised by various producer associations along with packers. On behalf of packers, Wilson wrote that “we request the privilege of an early conference between the full Committee of Fifteen and appropriate representatives of the Institute” of American Meat Packers. He also expressed a desire to meet with them at a later date.<sup>163</sup> In November 1921, representatives from the ANLSA, the Corn Belt Meat Producers, and the National Wool Growers Association met informally with representatives from the IAMP at the stately Congress Hotel in Chicago. They decided that the time was opportune to hold a formal meeting with others in the livestock industry in December to further discuss the “Eat more Meat” campaign. In addition to those associations named above,

representatives at this meeting also came from the Farm Bureau, the KLA, and the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers' Association. E. L. Burke, former head of the ANLSA Market Committee that led the recent fight against packers, was chosen as chairman of the committee.

The committee of fifteen approved of what it considered "cooperation" with the big packers as well as the creation of the NLSMB. With Burke as chairman "the consensus was unanimous that there is not only an urgent need, but also an unusual opportunity, for cooperation between the producers, the packers, the commission men, the retailers, and the Department of Agriculture." The purpose of the new organization was to furnish the consumer with "a maximum amount of the products of livestock at the lowest cost consistent with a fair return to those producers, manufacturers, and distributors who perform essential services by efficient methods economically sound." The NLSMB was created primarily to counteract anti-meat advertising.<sup>164</sup>

Anti-meat sentiment grew in the early twentieth century through the efforts of vegetarians and health reformers. Anti-meat advertising, as the meat industry referred to it, criticized meat for many reasons. They claimed that meat caused diseases, both because of germs on it and because overconsumption could lead to nephritis and gout. They claimed meat eating led to violent behavior and to alcoholic consumption. Many people within the medical community were swayed by these scientific and popular articles and advertisements. More Americans began to reduce meat consumption as well.<sup>165</sup>

By October 1922, the Meat Board was up and running. It was financed by a five-cent fee on the shipper for every carload of livestock and a five-cent fee from the buyer.<sup>166</sup> Although some commission firms and stockyard companies initially resisted collecting fees, more and more of them relented over time. Part of the fees paid the salary of a managing director who was not actually a member of the Board. In January 1924, after a long search, the Meat Board chose former

North Dakota county agent and current director of extension for the Holstein-Frisian Association, R. C. Pollock as its manager.

President of the IAMP, Thomas Wilson, had won a great victory for his dream of cooperation with the creation of the NLSMB. However, Wilson himself credited the IAMP for the newfound better relations with producers. He explained to his fellow packers that when the IAMP was reorganized relations with producers was at its lowest point ever. At that time, in 1919, the executive committee of the IAMP had reported that “during the last year it has been found impossible to discuss with the producers of livestock problems common both to themselves and to the packing industry.” Wilson then confidently intoned that now, a little over two years later, “your president and other representatives of the Institute have received numerous invitations to address associations of livestock producers.”<sup>167</sup> Wilson and the IAMP helped to foster a new spirit of cooperation with producers—a fact that did not go unnoticed by observers.

Many within the livestock industry noted and marveled at the new spirit of cooperation that animated producers. For example, the rapid and almost complete shift from conflict to cooperation with packers was noted by former KLA president Frank Witherspoon, Jr. in an article titled “Let us go forward together, not backward apart” from 1923. Witherspoon speculated on the cause of the present problems in the livestock industry and on who was to blame for them. The “packer,” he wrote, “has been ruled out by faith.” He explained with surprise that “only a few years ago the great offender was the packer. At meetings of this kind he was . . . a villain incarnate, he was a highway robber without a mask.” He wrote that at these meetings they even collected donations to prosecute the packer. He noted that things were different, that today “Mr. Packer is hailed as the most holy of holies.” He also noted that the KLA used to be against monopolies but now

encouraged them “as an economic necessity.”<sup>168</sup> Witherspoon marveled at how rapidly the producer’s attitude toward the packer had improved.

Even observers outside of the livestock industry noticed the new relationship. In 1930, Herman Steen, a journalist, wrote to certain members of the ANLSA about it. He explained that he had been “requested by [the] editor of *Country Gentleman* to write an article setting forth the reasons why the relations between the livestock producers and the meat packers are now so much improved over what they were dozen or fifteen years ago.”<sup>169</sup> Presumably after receiving feedback from livestock industry leaders, Steen composed his article and compiled a number of possible factors. Among other things, he noted that Thomas Wilson changed the packing industry’s public policy toward stockmen and that the NLSMB brought packers and producers together to work toward a “common interest.” He also noted that stockmen thought retail prices were too high and thought that packers would decrease these prices if they could enter retail. Steen marveled at the “strange peace” that reigned between producer and packer which he ascribed to “constructive cooperation.”<sup>170</sup>

Producers of the ANLSA, state livestock associations, and the Farm Bureau overcame their unwillingness to cooperate with the big meat packers in their plans to boost meat consumption. While both producers and packers understood the necessity of reforming the distribution side, they disagreed in how it should be achieved. Wilson and the packers wanted to cooperate with retailers to bring about more efficient distribution, while the producers—oddly enough, given their recent war on the packers—wanted the packers to enter the retail business, which the packers did not want to do, and legally could not do because of the consent decree.

Retailers were pleased that the consent decree prevented the big packers from entering their trade. Most retailers thought that the packer’s national and efficient distribution network would

easily drive their much smaller operations out of business. A retailer, at that time, could refer to any business that sold meat; hotels, restaurants, Pullman cars, merchants, and others. Rudolf Clemen, a friend of the packing industry and former instructor of history and economics at Northwestern University even blamed retail grocers for enactment of the consent decree. Clemen wrote that “it has been strongly urged that the decree would seem to have been the result of active propaganda on the part of the Southern Wholesale Grocers’ Association whose monopoly was threatened by the competition of the packers.” In noting this, Clemen cited a work by Lewis Haney called “The Case against the Meat Packers,” who had been with the FTC but currently served as chief economist of the Bureau of Research and Publicity of the Southern Wholesale Grocers’ Association.<sup>171</sup> Economic historians Aduddell and Cain, speaking of a later hearing on modification, partly confirmed Clemen’s suspicion by suggesting that the consent decree was enacted to “protect competitors, not competition.”<sup>172</sup>

The consent decree had only been adopted in February 1920, yet producers almost immediately wanted it modified to allow for packers to retail in meats. In December of that year, the Colorado Stock Growers Association, at its annual Convention in Denver, passed a resolution calling for its modification. It was not the only livestock association to pass a resolution like this. The official journal of the ANLSA agreed with the Colorado organization. The ANLSA adopted a resolution at its mid-year meeting of 1921, stating that the present system of distribution is “inefficient and uneconomical,” and supported entrance of the Big Five into retail to improve efficiency. The ANLSA even appointed a committee of three to confer with packers on modifying the decree to allow for this.<sup>173</sup> It seems counterintuitive that the producers would fight for years to divorce packers from their control of the stockyards—the place where livestock were purchased—



only to beg them to expand into the market where the finished product is sold. Producers, however, had their own reasons.

Producers thought that retail prices were too high and that this prevented the steady flow of livestock from farm to table. They thought that retailers needed to be more responsive to the price of live cattle so that they could change their prices accordingly. If livestock prices were low, then retailers should lower the price of meat in order to keep the supply moving. Producers ascribed all sorts of reason for high retail prices ranging from incompetence to deceitfulness. They also believed that inefficiency was a major cause of high retail meat prices. Cattlemen thought that the big packers—due to their size—could sell meats more economically. They also thought that because of the packers vested interest in the livestock industry combined with their information network could also balance the retail price relative to the livestock price.

The producer's charge that retailers were inefficient was in many cases true. Americans in the 1920s, for the most part, still shopped at small, locally owned retail shops with a neighborhood clientele. These shops were not usually operated by businessmen but often by people who were "incompetent and inexperienced."<sup>174</sup> Meat prices were also higher in the 1920s than they had been in recent memory. Food prices doubled from 1916 to mid-1920, then plateaued at about 35% higher than they were in 1916. Prices remained around this level for the rest of the decade.<sup>175</sup> Curiously, a USDA study found that even with high prices, retailers still only reaped small profits—a fact that suggests retailer inefficiency. High retail meat prices then, were mostly due to ignorance of business principles and chicanery.

Industry observers at the time agreed that many retailers were inefficient. Charles Brand, a consulting specialist in marketing with the USDA and a man who favored meat retailing by big packers, thought that there were too many small retailers whose business model appeared to be

“large margins—small volumes.” He explained that this resulted in “slow turnover and high operating cost,” and furthermore, that this impeded the buying and selling of livestock at the stockyards.<sup>176</sup> Everett C. Brown, president of the National Livestock Exchange, agreed, even blaming retailers for “being responsible, by their extortionate practices, for restricting meat consumption.” His accusation was spread all over the country by the newspapers.<sup>177</sup> Many contemporaries who studied the food system recognized the possible advantages of a large, consolidated grocery store chain, but none such store existed yet. The largest chain store at the time, A & P, was nowhere near the size of the big packers.<sup>178</sup> Even though chain stores held the potential to achieve similar efficiency in meat distribution as the packers had, stockmen still generally opposed them.

Producers and others in the industry hoped that if the big packers could operate as meat retailers then they would be more efficient and bring fair prices to both producer and consumer. Stockmen based their hopes to some extent on the example of smaller packers in the Northwest like Charles Frye in Seattle, Washington. *The Producer* described his “well located” retail market in glowing terms, made up of “commodious shops with every up to date appliance.” *The Producer* explained that “the volume of their business enables them to operate at a narrower margin of profit” which enables these packers to “pay more for livestock and still retail the meat at a lower price” than other places. Frye pointed out that if retail meat prices were lowered in accordance with the low livestock prices, this would have increased consumer demand.<sup>179</sup> Charles Brand, consulting specialist in marketing with the USDA agreed with Frye, even to the point of touting the efficiency to be derived from the big packer’s “vertical combination” if they could retail meats.<sup>180</sup>

Unfortunately for the stockmen, the packers were not enthusiastic about engaging in meat retailing. *The Producer* complained about the packer’s silence on the issue and how they never

explained why they would not engage in it.<sup>181</sup> The reason seems to be that it would have been “unprofitable and inefficient.” Some economic historians who studied the meat packers and the consent decree support this conclusion. These historians reason that the other packers, not bound by the decree, still chose not to engage in retailing for the most part—Frye being an exception. They also noted that by the 1950s, most chain stores had integrated backward in many commodities, except in meat packing.<sup>182</sup> In their own newsletter to stockmen, the packers never condemned retailers as the producers did, but sometimes appeared to defend them by noting the low cost of meat compared to other food products.<sup>183</sup>

Far from criticizing meat retailers, the big packers actually sought to cooperate with them in the same way that they did with producers. The IAMP reached out to retailers shortly after it was created in 1919. Thomas Wilson even recognized the IAMP’s tremendous success in fostering cooperation with retailers. He recalled that as of September 1919, the big meat packers “had no relations with those who distributed nearly all of [their] products.” He then observed that “today [in 1922,] packers and retailers of meat are cooperating vigorously to promote better merchandising, increased consumption and more cordial trade relations.”<sup>184</sup> Part of this growth was due to the creation of the Meat Council of Chicago in 1921. This was a joint committee with meat retailers whose goal was to “harmonize the producers desire that the public eat more meat and the public’s desire for cheaper meat.” John T. Russell, a Chicago retailer, served as its president. The IAMP and the United Master Butchers of Chicago were involved as well.<sup>185</sup> The Meat Council of Chicago was typical of other Meat Councils across the country in that it contained an equal number of packer representatives and retail representatives. By 1922, the two parties had formed an umbrella organization, the National Association of Meat Councils.<sup>186</sup>

Throughout the 1920s, the IAMP promoted the cooperation of retailers with the rest of the meat industry. The president of the IAMP spoke at the Meat Council events, gave a joint radio broadcast with the head of the United Master Butchers, and worked cooperatively with retailers through the NLSMB.<sup>187</sup> Cooperation with retailers must have made more economic sense for the packers than entering the trade themselves.

In 1924, at the behest of the NLSMB, the USDA conducted a nation-wide survey of the retail meat industry and confirmed many of the suspicions of producers. R. C. Pollock claimed that the NLSMB was responsible for getting Congress to fund the \$50,000 USDA survey of retail methods and practices.<sup>188</sup> The study found that “consumers generally know less about differences in cuts and quality of meat than of any other commodity.” The report also found that “a large number of people engage in the retail meat business who have no conception of its requirements and who lack practical knowledge from an operating standpoint.” As a remedy, some merchants even suggested a “compulsory apprenticeship period” for those engaged in the retail meat trade. Surprisingly, the report showed that on average retailers made 1.7 net profit—hardly enough to live on. It also found that most people purchased meat close to home, with only twenty-five percent traveling five blocks or more to do so.<sup>189</sup>

One way to reform retail was to pressure retailers from the consumer end. The NLSMB, from its inception, focused on increasing consumer knowledge of meat. It held lectures on meat, had meat story contests, held a meat for health week, and sponsored meat cookbooks. The NLSMB, in cooperation with state experiment stations and the USDA, also launched a study on the quality and palatability of meat.<sup>190</sup> However, promoting consumer knowledge of meat was a way of not only creating demand but of training the retailer.

One of the ways in which the NLSMB tried to simultaneously boost demand and change retailer's habits was through meat demonstrations for large consuming centers in the eastern United States. It would hold meat cooking demonstrations and meat cutting demonstrations, which were both commonly understood as consumer-focused. The meat cutting demonstrations featured a man who would talk and carve at the same time. He explained the cuts and their merits as he deftly carved up a carcass. *The Producer* captured the delight of the stockmen in its description of a meat demonstration given to the 1930 ANLSA convention. The author explained that "with marvelous dexterity he sawed and sliced, rolled and skewered, separated and put together, boning the chuck, rump, and other parts, until the whole half carcass was partitioned into the largest possible number of appetizing cuts." Hartzell, the demonstrator, without "one scrap wasted," was able to keep "a running fire of explanation and comment, with never a slip of knife or tongue."<sup>191</sup> The first demonstrations were with lamb but after seeing its success, the Board then began promoting demonstrations of beef.

According to the general manager of the Meat Board, it was not consumers, but the packers and their salesmen who requested these meat demonstrations the most, followed by the retailers. In preparing for a meat demonstration, the demonstrator would contact the local packers through the IAMP, the local packers would then choose a chairman for the demonstration. The man who actually performed the demonstration, D. W. Hartzell, said that the packers went above and beyond in their support of the beef demonstrations. He said that "we can't thank the packers too wholeheartedly for the splendid cooperation they have given us."<sup>192</sup> Then the Meat Board would hold a meat demonstration for the packers and their salesmen. The first meat demonstration ever held was probably at the Pacific International with the help of Oregon Agricultural College, sometime between 1919 and the mid-1920s. According to Inez Willson, the head of the home

economics department of the NLSMB, the meat demonstrations were very popular. She said that they had requests for meat demonstrations in 105 cities and that in a town of 11,000 people, they would typically have to turn away 200 to 300 people at each demonstration or cooking school due to space limitations.<sup>193</sup> In addition to packers, retailers, and consumers, the demonstrations were also given to representatives of hotels, chain stores, livestock exchanges, high school home economics groups, breeders associations, and livestock associations.<sup>194</sup>

Consumers, educated by the NLSMB, forced retailers to adapt. Professor Helmreich explained to the NLSMB executives that sometimes women go to a butcher asking for a cut of meat that they saw at the meat demonstration and the butcher is unable to make it, so the woman goes to the butcher down the street who can. This demand for new cuts, it was hoped, would pressure the retailers and butchers to attend the NLSMB classes. As Helmreich put it, “this is the way we can bring about mass education.”<sup>195</sup> General manager of the NLSMB, Pollock, was hopeful that the well-trained butcher could “keep a lot of these so-called butchers out of the trade.” He explained that “the methods and manner of whacking meat have been too simple and you have had a lot of men entering the game who knew nothing about it, they would make better shoe dealers than meat men.”<sup>196</sup> The new cuts were based on observation and testing. As professor Helmreich explained, they were based on science. The new cuts were developed based on the distinction between muscles of movement and muscles for support. He was confident that the new types would eventually triumph over the old methods stating that “anything that is scientifically correct and is also practical is bound to win.”<sup>197</sup> This was also a way of standardizing meat cuts.<sup>198</sup>

Head of the United Master Butchers, John T. Russell also wanted reform of the retail industry to bring efficiency to butchering. Russell declared that “I am heartily in favor of any new cuts or improvements and I know our association is” too. He complained that the “hard boiled old

timers” were impossible to educate and would not accept the new ways of the NLSMB. He said with thankfulness that many of them had left the business in the last two years. To further educate retailers on efficiency, formal classes were being offered at vocational schools and universities on meat retailing. Russell praised these courses because he thought they were making a “better butcher.” He explained that the courses taught the butcher “where to cut out a reasonable profit where he was losing money” and they showed him how to make the cuts that the customers wanted while making a reasonable profit. It also taught the butcher how to keep accounting books, something that Russell admitted that the retailers were “backward” in.<sup>199</sup>

The final reform that many producers wanted was the establishment of standards and grades of meat so that quality cattle could fetch higher prices. Many stockmen had invested in purebred cattle in part at least with the hope that their meat would fetch a premium price. For decades, packers and breeder associations had urged stockmen to “upbreed” their herds, meaning to insert purebred blood into them. Purebred cattle—Herefords, Shorthorns, and Angus, to name a few—were more efficient animals in putting on weight quicker and on less feed than “scrub” cattle, or unimproved and grass-fed cattle.

Because packers, breeders, and others considered meat from purebreds or upbred cattle as superior to scrub cattle, it should have also fetched a premium at the cattle markets. Unfortunately, for growers and feeders of upbred stock, several factors in the 1920s and 30s worked against them. Demand for high quality was always smaller than for cheap meat because only the wealthier ten percent of Americans could afford it. Plus, this class reduced its meat intake more than any other at the behest of the Food Administration during WWI. In addition, retail prices for meat were high and cattlemen believed that some retailers were selling low-quality meat at high-quality prices.

Hence, breeders and others wanted to increase the market for quality through consumer education and also to put into place quality guarantees for consumers.

In the mid-1920s, two producer led groups were created to answer the dual problems of consumer ignorance and “retailer misrepresentation” by the promotion of government grading of beef.<sup>200</sup> The idea of grading was not new, as packers already had a well-developed system of classing and grading livestock. The desirability of government grading of agricultural commodities was old as well; demands for federal grading of wheat date back to the late nineteenth century. However, the types of cattle that should be graded was a contentious issue in which western growers, breeders, and meat packers had differing opinions. Breeders tended to favor grading of only the top two grades—the highest quality—while western cattlemen wanted all types graded. The packers were generally opposed to any form of government grading. Although the packers ultimately relented, they took full advantage of the situation to improve relations with producers.<sup>201</sup>

The breeders were represented by the National Better Beef Association (BBA). Organized in Spring 1926, it enjoyed the support of the major breeding associations, Hereford, Shorthorn, and Angus. Alvin Sanders, editor of the *Breeder's Gazette* was one of the main promoters behind the grading of meat and was elitist in that he referred to anything less than purebred cattle as “cat meat.” His goal was to increase consumption of high-quality beef, which would also increase demand for purebred cattle. Not surprisingly, he thought that the government only needed to grade the top two types of meat, prime and choice, because anything below that he considered inferior. Not only should cattle be of good stock, but they should also be finished on corn.<sup>202</sup>

Western cattlemen, who typically did not raise cattle of prime or choice beef, did not want their livestock lumped together with more inferior grades. Western cattle, according to contemporary packer classification, were “range cattle from the region west of Missouri and north



of the southern boundary of Kansas.” These cattle graded as “medium” or “good” quality yet were still of “superior breed.” They were bred in the West, raised on grass but lacked the “flesh and finish” of “native beeves” which were bred and raised in the Midwest and generally fattened on corn.<sup>203</sup> The “native beeves” could produce “prime” or “choice” meat. Western cattlemen feared that if prime and choice were the only grades, then consumers would assume that all other cattle were inferior. In fact, according to the packers, there were a number of grades below good and medium. The very lowest type of meat came from scrub, or unimproved and grass fed, cattle or from old dairy cows that no longer produced milk.

Western cattlemen, then, supported something called the Truth in Meats campaign which called for government grading of all meat. The campaign was started by O. M. Plummer of Oregon, and similar to the NLSMB, Truth in Meats sought to acquaint the “housewife” with “standards and quality in meat.” Its goal was to secure the cooperation of the Bureau of Animal Industry in marking carcasses as coming from “a steer, a cow, a heifer, or a bull,” and also according to grade. Its leaders hoped that this would benefit wholesalers, retailers, and consumers alike as to provide reliable information as to the type of cattle, and so the producer could get a higher price for his or her western “well-bred stock,” even if it was not “native.” This campaign sought a five cent per carload fee to do its work.<sup>204</sup> Many within the ANLSA supported the movement, including Robert Kleburg, the owner of the legendary King Ranch in Texas,<sup>205</sup> Charles Collins, and Fred Bixby.<sup>206</sup> Supporters like Kansas breeder and rancher, W. J. Tod, for example, thought that Truth in Meats would provide consumer protection. He noted that producers were upset with the butcher who sold the “housewife an inferior article, while she asks for and pays for the best.”<sup>207</sup>

Western producers wanted to distinguish their cattle from worn out dairy cows. Dairy farmers sold their old cows to the packers, which then became the cheapest of meats. The cheaper

meats were almost always in high demand. Cattlemen generally resented this competition and especially disdained the fact that in the mid-1920s their well-bred stock was not fetching much more money than the “dairy-yard culls” of Wisconsin, Minnesota, northern Illinois, and other areas in the north-central US.

Western producers were especially desirous to distinguish their cattle from the dairy “reactor” cows. A recent Chicago ordinance declared that all milk sold within the city had to come from cows that were certified to be free of bovine tuberculosis (BTb). This caused many dairy operations to test their cows, which meant that any of them that “reacted” to the BTb test were quickly sold to the slaughterhouses. In addition to depressing livestock prices, reactor cows on the market did not inspire consumer confidence. The Bureau of Animal Industry declared reactor meat fit for human consumption if it was cooked—killing the bacteria—and sold as canned meat. However, cattlemen suspected that the packers were selling the ribs, loins, and other parts of reactor cows to consumers. Editor James Poole argued that this practice not only deceived consumers but also created unfair competition with good beef.<sup>208</sup> In answer to Poole, J. C. Mohler, chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry, explained that the reactor cattle were carefully tested by meat inspectors and that those cows in the early stages of BTb often only had “slight localized lesions” and the rest of the meat was salvageable and perfectly healthy.<sup>209</sup> This meat was not identified as coming from reactor cows, so consumers did not know if they had purchased this meat. The Master Butcher’s Association opposed this practice as unethical. It claimed that only unscrupulous butchers and retailers sold reactor beef and that some retailers bought it from plants outside of government inspection. This sort of scandal only heightened calls for government grading.<sup>210</sup>

The packers used meat grading as an opportunity to foster collaboration. The packers initially opposed meat grading because they thought that “the grading and marking of beef would decrease the total amount of sales” because consumers would not buy the inferior meat. Of the big four packers, Wilson and Armour were the most favorable to grading, but only if there was a demand for it. However, if grading was going to be done, then the big packers favored grading only the top two, rather than grading all classes of meat.<sup>211</sup> Some producers suspected that the packers would not want grading on all beef because they would have trouble selling their reactor cows.<sup>212</sup> In December 1926, representatives of the IAMP and the BBA met to attempt a compromise on grading.<sup>213</sup> After ten days of deliberation, the packers assured the BBA that they would give grading “a fair trial.” A memo held by the NLSMB stated that “the outcome of these conferences indicates clearly that the packers . . . are eager to cooperate practically and to try out any practical suggestions that may be offered.” The packers also wanted a “closer relationship between feeders and packers than now exists” so that they could keep the cattlemen informed on demand for quality meat.<sup>214</sup> The initial plan only called for the marketing of “the two top grades of beef, ‘prime,’ and ‘choice,’ bearing the government stamp.”<sup>215</sup> It was decided “that buyer requests for graded beef would be promoted through a special program in the National Live Stock and Meat Board.”<sup>216</sup> As one historian perceptively noted, despite low cattle prices, initial packer opposition to grading, and their suspected use of reactor cows, “the sparks of the producer-packer conflict were not noticeably fanned by any general anti-packer sentiment. The retailer was the culprit.”<sup>217</sup>

Another outcome of the meeting was an attempt to control the output of the top grades of beef through collaboration with the packers. Because only a limited number of Americans could afford prime and choice meat, it could easily be overproduced. After all, the top-quality grades

only made up around nine percent of the nation's beef supply. Former Wall Street banker and champion Angus breeder Oakleigh Thorne, the main mover behind the BBA, wanted to use the BBA to stabilize the movement of top-quality beef. He wanted the work of the BBA handled through the NLSMB and even donated \$5,000 to the NLSMB to carry out its work to publicize meat grading. Within months, the NLSMB had created a "better beef department."<sup>218</sup> Thorne then wanted the NLSMB to get in touch with the breeders and as time went on bring "closer affiliation between the Breeders and packers to the end that quality of beef demanded by the public could be produced by the breeders and to lessen as much as possible the production of the quality of beef."<sup>219</sup>

In May 1927, producers were rewarded for their efforts with a trial run of government grading. The experiment of the grading system was initiated in nine cities in the U.S.: Boston, Kansas City, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Washington DC, St. Joseph, Missouri, Omaha, and Sioux City, South Dakota to determine its effect on "producers, consumers, and distributing agencies."<sup>220</sup> Packers in these cities could request to have a government representative of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics who would approve of the grades stamped on carcasses free of charge. The marking was done with a roller using vegetable dyes.<sup>221</sup> The percentage of cattle marked prime and choice would have made up only a small percentage of all of the livestock slaughtered.

Swift and other packers soon saw the financial benefits of grading and began marketing their own brands of high-quality meat, such as "Swift's Premium" and "Swift's Choice."<sup>222</sup> *The Producer* recommended that the packers "should be congratulated on taking this step of their own volition."<sup>223</sup> By December 1927, up to 25,000 cattle had been stamped and graded.<sup>224</sup> After almost a full year of the experiment, the packer's producer oriented newspaper, *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, stated that the grading system met with "widespread approval," and reported that packers

and retailers both wanted the BAE to add a third grade, “good” to the existing ones.<sup>225</sup> However, problems arose as packers and the government maintained their own separate grading systems. Although the packers approved of government grading, they refused to abandon their own brand name grades. For instance, as Congress considered a bill on livestock and meat grading, the ANLSA secretary met several times with the packers who he accused of adopting “stalling tactics” on the bill.<sup>226</sup> The packers seemingly wanted control of how meat was graded.

Meat grading fit neatly into the later consumer movement, which sought objective standards for quality in almost all goods. In the 1930s, consumer advocacy groups demanded “grade labelling” of food products as a way of assuring quality but also fostering competition among companies and thus bringing greater efficiency. With so many competing brand names and the conflicting advertisements, grading in general offered consumers an objective standard for buying goods. The big meat packer’s reluctance to support government grading initially may have been due to the fear that it would increase competition among themselves. When grading actually made the price of top-quality meats higher some consumers balked.<sup>227</sup>

While grading was good for certain producers and packers, high-end consumers were not entirely thrilled with grading. Since 1926, beef prices had steadily risen and in December 1927, consumers reacted to these higher prices.<sup>228</sup> What became known as the Boston Beef Boycott began when the Boston Hotel Association encouraged its members to place placards at their restaurant tables urging consumers not to eat steak or roasts, “until price and quality return to normalcy.” Live cattle prices plummeted almost immediately, causing producers and packers to lose money. This boycott spread along the Atlantic seaboard and westerners retaliated with letters of protest and threats to boycott manufactured items from the East. *The Producer* complained that

newspaper men on the east coast wanted the free admission of South American beef “in the interest of cheaper food for ‘the masses.’”<sup>229</sup>

Secretary of Agriculture William Jardine promptly responded to the developing boycott and falling prices with a letter of explanation. He described how the cattlemen had suffered from low prices since the end of the Great War and that the current prices were only just now providing them with a fair return. He noted that “while cattle prices have advanced almost continuously during 1927, the sharp advance came after the middle of the year, particularly in the better grades of cattle and beef, which, however, makeup but a minor proportion of the total supply.”<sup>230</sup> Based on Jardine’s estimation, it seems that government grading of beef tended to increase the price of prime and choice. His appeal may have diffused the situation because shortly thereafter the secretary of the City of Boston Hotel Association wrote that his intention was not to threaten a boycott.<sup>231</sup>

Despite the abortive boycott, government grading was off to a promising start, but producers still wanted the packers to enter retailing which meant that the consent decree needed to be modified. Packers fought enforcement of the decree from its inception. At first, packers were given extensions of time to allow them to dispose of “stockyard holdings and their interest in unrelated lines.” Then in the mid-1920s, it was suspended pending the outcome of a court case involving the California Cooperative Canneries, until May 1929. At the conclusion of that case, the decree was slated to go into effect, but Armour and Swift filed petitions asking for modification of the decree. They argued that the conditions in the industry had changed dramatically since the enactment of the decree and that its provisions were now “inequitable or unnecessary.”<sup>232</sup>

A central piece of the packer’s argument for modification was the producer’s discontent with the retail prohibition in the decree. Armour’s petition to the court quoted a resolution passed

by the National Wool Growers Association (NWGA) stating that the NWGA “expresses its opposition to the ‘consent decree’ and directs that its president takes such action as he may deem advisable or necessary for the modification of this decree.”<sup>233</sup> On June 6, 1929, Louis Swift sent a memo to President Herbert Hoover asking if it would not be desirable to have public hearings on modification of the consent decree because he “understands that most of the agricultural associations would like to see the decree modified.” Hoover passed it on to Attorney General William D. Mitchell.<sup>234</sup>

At the hearings, producers testified on the packer’s behalf, asking that the packers be allowed to retail meats and related items. The wholesale grocer associations opposed this and argued that the court did not have jurisdiction to change the consent decree. However, the court ruled that it did have jurisdiction and proceeded with the hearing.<sup>235</sup>

The ANLSA leaders were apprehensive that if the consent decree was allowed to be modified that it might lead to modification of provisions they opposed or that it might be thrown out altogether, which was what the big packers seemed to want. The leaders of the ANLSA only wanted modification of the decree to allow the packers to retail in meat and unrelated lines and to use their refrigerator cars to distribute it. The ANLSA was afraid that the packers would somehow get the decree modified to allow them to own stockyards, which the ANLSA adamantly opposed. Armour’s Livestock Bureau chief Edward Wentworth reassured the ANLSA leaders that his company was not interested in owning stockyards, but only supported that proposition because Swift wanted it and the two packers wanted to present a united front to the federal court. Wentworth told ANLSA Secretary F. E. Mollin that while stockyard ownership was included in the packer’s petition, they “did not intend to press that matter at all.” The National Wool Growers

Association also wanted modification to allow for packers to enter retail, but it chose to remain silent on ownership of stockyards, a position Swift must have been pleased with.<sup>236</sup>

Even though most producers wanted the big packers to retail meats, there was still scant hope that they would do so. In a phone conversation, Ed Wentworth told Mollin that he couldn't guarantee that packers would enter retail but that "confidentially negotiations are being made by both the big packers with certain chain stores, looking to a consolidation, absorption, or some kind of an arrangement that would meet the situation."<sup>237</sup> Swift had been more adamant that his company would not engage in retail, instead stating that he hoped the "increased use of package meats, stimulated by the new freezing process would make unnecessary their so doing."<sup>238</sup> Wentworth did not want to be quoted on this matter. ANLSA vice president O'Donel did not hold out much hope and thought that packers entering retail was a "pipe dream."<sup>239</sup>

Some stockmen harbored serious doubts about packers. Former ANLSA president Fred Bixby was like most observers of the livestock industry when he noted that stockmen "have been getting along rather smoothly with the packers for several years." But he also qualified his statement by writing that he "never allowed [him]self to think that everything was as smooth as the packers wanted us to believe." He was probably not the only stockman to view producer-packer relations with apprehension.<sup>240</sup>

Leading producers of the ANLSA explained how the packers attempted to manipulate the resolutions passed by state livestock associations regarding the consent decree. According to Bixby and O'Donel, Wentworth and other packer officials attended many state livestock association conventions and proposed resolutions that favored the packers in some way. Bixby and other stockmen who were aware of Wentworth's *modus operandi* would change his resolutions at the last minute before they were voted on by convention attendees. At state conventions without Bixby



or an equally vigilant stockman, however, credulous attendees passed resolutions penned by Wentworth and other packer representatives. Bixby wrote that Wentworth's resolutions "in many cases [have] been a little too broad and [have] taken in too much territory."<sup>241</sup> O'Donel seconded Bixby's accusation stating that "fellows like Wentworth are always gumshoeing around at our conventions and representing that the packers are suffering from an injustice on account of the prohibition in the consent decree against their engaging in the retail meat business." Essentially, the packers got unsuspecting state associations to pass resolutions that the big packers could then use as evidence of producer support. The packers especially wanted to use these resolutions to show the court that producers favored broad modification of the consent decree.<sup>242</sup>

In light of the previous claims about Wentworth, it is possible that he hoped to use the state associations to influence the court to rescind the decree entirely. Wentworth explained to Mollin that the grocers, who opposed any modification of the decree, had around 200 representatives and that he wanted the packers to have a similar show of strength. Wentworth wanted many state associations to testify at the hearing. Bixby did not want them there because he feared that their representatives would not understand the case thoroughly and would end up agreeing to things that would be bad for producers. He also knew that the packers would pay for many of their tickets to Washington, DC. Mollin later wrote to the state associations telling them that if they testified separately then the ANLSA would not go to the hearings because then its claim to speak on behalf of the western stockmen would be nullified. Instead, he asked them to send letters to the ANLSA authorizing it to speak on their behalf.<sup>243</sup>

Even suspecting packer manipulation on many counts, the producers were still willing to work with them. The ANLSA spent its own funds to testify and hire a lawyer for the decree hearings. Despite Wentworth's behind the scenes maneuvering, the ANLSA considered the

packers overall to be “producer minded” and believed that they would serve them better than the retail chain stores would or could.<sup>244</sup> There seemed to be a hint of collusion on the part of Mollin and Wentworth as evidenced on the occasion of John Craig’s death. Craig had been the president of the Western South Dakota Stock Growers’ Association and was also one of three directors of Swan Land and Cattle Company. Wentworth feared that there could “easily be a split arise over policy if certain people have become too ambitious” within Craig’s former association. Wentworth cautioned Mollin that “you ought to be there to help keep the thing steadied and lined up with the American National.”<sup>245</sup> Wentworth was eager to preserve the power of the ANLSA.

Another consideration of the ANLSA was its position within the western livestock industry. In January 1930, the federal court in Washington, DC told the big packers that they needed more evidence to establish their case. Swift and Armour wanted the four major livestock associations to file petitions in favor of modification in order to show the feeling of producers. The ANLSA feared that if the other national associations—lamb and swine—for instance, both went along then the ANLSA would lose an opportunity to strengthen its position as a national leader in cattle. Plus, its leaders thought that the other associations were not concerned with stockyard ownership and thought that the whole decree may be thrown out if they did not participate.<sup>246</sup>

Given that the packers did not want to engage in retail, it begs the question, why the packers wanted the decree modified in the first place. Historians of the consent decree, Aduddell and Cain, explained that the stockyards were a major part of the packers’ power prior to WWII. However, historian Jimmy Skaggs claims that the packers wanted to be divested of stockyards.<sup>247</sup> Some within the producer’s circle also wondered why the packers wanted modification. ANLSA lawyer thought that “if it is a fact that the packers do not contemplate entering into the retail trade, unrestricted ownership of the stockyards might be the primary motive back of the movement for

modification of the consent decree.”<sup>248</sup> Many stockmen thought that packer ownership of the physical market—the stockyards—gave them undue influence over the commission men, who rented office space from them, and over the market in general.

The federal court issued its ruling in 1931, but two national wholesale grocers associations along with the U.S. government appealed it. The 1931 ruling modified the decree to allow packers to retain their refrigerated cars and trucks but were not allowed to enter meat retailing. It also allowed them to sell at wholesale, though not at retail, products unrelated to the meat packing business.<sup>249</sup> The federal court judged that if the packers controlled the trade in meats and other foods it “would probably result in the almost complete annihilation of the independent retail grocer.” The rest of the decree was put into full force, meaning that the four remaining big packers—Swift, Armour, Wilson, and Cudahy—had to divest themselves of stockyards, market newspapers, terminal railroads, and other ventures. In 1932, the Supreme Court overruled the lower court and stated that the packers could not sell groceries even by wholesale.<sup>250</sup>

A brief look at the justices involved helps explain why the Supreme Court ruled against the packers. Three justices took no part in the decision. Of the four who made up the majority opinion, Louis Brandeis looms large for his long-time defense of social justice and opposition to trusts. The newly appointed Benjamin Cardozo was “known to be liberal” and James McReynolds had a reputation as a trustbuster but also could be “impatient with government regulation of business.” The fourth justice, Owen Roberts, was described by a historian as having “no consistent jurisprudential principles.” Roberts may have simply sided with the slim majority. On the other side, Pierce Butler, known for “conservative economic views” drafted the dissent. Not surprisingly, Butler voted more consistently for laissez-faire than any other justice in the twentieth century. Willis Van Devanter concurred with Butler. After 1930, Van Devanter was known to be

“strongly conservative, if not reactionary.” The two dissenting justices supported the packer’s position probably due to their devotion to conservative and laissez-faire principles.<sup>251</sup>

Neither producers nor packers were satisfied with the Supreme Court ruling, but in the decade leading up to the hearing, the big packers got the producers to work with them. Producers did not like the consent decree provision that prohibited packers from engaging in retail. Packers, largely through Wilson, secured a key victory in getting the major producer organizations to join the Meat Board. With bi-annual meetings and other conferences, producers and packers were in constant contact. Producers believed that their poor returns were due to retailers crooked practices, incompetence, and inefficiencies and that only the big packers could remedy the situation. Likewise, they agreed with packers that they should actively boost consumer demand. They applauded packers in their support for meat grading as well. Producers grew closer to the packers in the 1920s as retailers became their new scapegoat. Despite the fact that packers like Armour were actively subverting producer associations, stockmen continued to support them. Even though stockmen experienced poor economic conditions for almost the entire decade, they never again waged a “war” on the packers, but instead worked with them to fix economic conditions—even looking to the packers to take over the distribution of their product.

The packers had called for “cooperation” with producers, and got it, but it was not a smooth thing. Each side worked for its own interest first but made compromises when necessary, as when the packers supported grading and when the ANLSA supported the packers in the consent decree hearing. The big packers probably found it convenient to work with one national meat association rather than hundreds of smaller ones. The packers seemed to use the threat of bypassing ANLSA authority and going to state and local associations in order to get the ANLSA to go along with them as with the creation of the NLSMB and with the consent decree hearings.

Improvement of the stockmen and packer relationship did not just take place in the fight for retail reform. It is evident in the way that packers and stockmen interacted with the federal government during this same period. They formed stronger associations and often shared the same views regarding federal policies.

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<sup>143</sup> Wood, *Kansas Beef Industry*, 223–4.

<sup>144</sup> Wood, *Kansas Beef Industry*, 98, does not account for the strenuous efforts on behalf of producers to cultivate this consumer demand. Schlebecker, *Cattle Raising*, 118 “cattlemen hoped for more intelligent buying by consumers when government graded beef hit the market in 1927, but no important change resulted.” He gives no indication of the efforts of cattlemen to promote better beef or why it was important.

<sup>145</sup> Bertram B. Fowler, *Meat, Men, Miracles*, (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1952), 155–7.

<sup>146</sup> *Kansas Stockman*, June 17, 1919.

<sup>147</sup> Fowler, *Meat, Men*, 157.

<sup>148</sup> Robert P. Howard, *James R. Howard and the Farm Bureau* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1983), 128–9.

<sup>149</sup> ANLSA Convention, 1920, p 51; Edward G. Nourse and Joseph G. Knapp, *The Co-operative Marketing of Livestock* (Brookings Institute: Washington, DC, 1931), 122–5.

<sup>150</sup> *Kansas Stockman*, October 15, 1920; Nourse, *Co-operative Marketing*, 122–5.

<sup>151</sup> “Cooperative Marketing Plans in Abeyance,” *The Producer*, January 1921, 20.

<sup>152</sup> ANLSA Convention 1921, 182.

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<sup>153</sup> *The Producer*, 1921 p 12

<sup>154</sup> Howard, *James R. Howard*, 154–55.

<sup>155</sup> Schlebecker, *Cattle Raising*, 72.

<sup>156</sup> James E. Poole, “Chicago Conferences for Relief of Producer,” *The Producer*, January 1921, 18.

<sup>157</sup> *The Producer*, January 1921, 20.

<sup>158</sup> Howard, *James R. Howard*, 128.

<sup>159</sup> “Eat More Meat Conference at Chicago,” *The Producer*, March 1921, 15; Clemen, *American Livestock*, 553–54.

<sup>160</sup> “Packers propose Campaign to teach Truth about Meat,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, August 1921.

<sup>161</sup> ANLSA Convention, 1921, 173.

<sup>162</sup> Howard, *James R. Howard*, 128–9; Fowler echoes this same sentiment about Wallace in *Meat, Men*.

<sup>163</sup> “Cooperation of Packers and Producers to Increase Consumption of Meat,” *The Producer*, September 1921, 21; “Producers answer Proposal to teach Truth about Meats,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, September 1921.

<sup>164</sup> “National Live Stock and Meat Board Proposed,” *The Producer*, January 1922, 11.

<sup>165</sup> Karen Iacobbo and Michael Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America: A History* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004).

<sup>166</sup> “Wallace’s Farmer discusses Live Stock and Meat Board,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, April 1922.

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- <sup>167</sup> Thomas E. Wilson, "The Future of the Institute of the American Meat Packers," (pamphlet, 1922 or 1923), 7, Hoover Papers.
- <sup>168</sup> *Kansas Stockman*, March 1, 1923.
- <sup>169</sup> Herman Steen to George Clough, July 12, 1930, Box 349 folder "Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," ANLSA Records.
- <sup>170</sup> Herman Steen, "The New Era in Packingtown," *Country Gentleman*, (January 1931): 12, 79–80.
- <sup>171</sup> Clemen, *American Livestock*, 784. Fowler also thought that the decree was a triumph for the wholesale grocers. *Men, Meat*, 157.
- <sup>172</sup> Robert M. Aduddell and Louis P. Cain, "The Consent decree in the Meatpacking Industry, 1920-1956," *Business History Review* 55, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 372.
- <sup>173</sup> "Packers and Retail Meat Trade," *The Producer*, December 1921, 19.
- <sup>174</sup> Ogle, *In Meat we Trust*, 113–114.
- <sup>175</sup> Harvey A. Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 175.
- <sup>176</sup> ANLSA Convention, 1924.
- <sup>177</sup> James E. Poole, "Chicago Conferences for Relief of Producer," *The Producer*, January 1921, 18.
- <sup>178</sup> Ogle, *In Meat we Trust*, 114.
- <sup>179</sup> "Retail Prices and Meat Consumption," *The Producer*, January 1921, 26; "Packers and the Retailing of Meat," *The Producer*, November 1924, 10.
- <sup>180</sup> ANLSA Convention, 1924, p 40-55.

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<sup>181</sup> *The Producer*, November 1924, 10.

<sup>182</sup> Robert M. Aduddell and Louis P. Cain, "The Consent decree in the Meatpacking Industry, 1920-1956," *Business History Review* 55, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 373.

<sup>183</sup> "Meat Packing Industry faces brighter Future, says Herrick," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, October 1923.

<sup>184</sup> Thomas E. Wilson, "The Future of the Institute of the American Meat Packers," (pamphlet, 1922 or 1923), p. 8, Hoover Papers.

<sup>185</sup> "Packers and Retailers in New Combination," *The Producer*, March 1921, 16.

<sup>186</sup> Clemen, *American Livestock*, 805–806.

<sup>187</sup> "Packer handles Meat Supply on Narrow Operating Margin," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, March 1924.

<sup>188</sup> R. C. Pollock, "Meat Research in the Program of the National Live Stock and Meat Board," *Journal of Animal Science* (1930), 188–191; W. C. Davis, "Methods and Practices of Retailing Meat," USDA Department Bulletin 1441, November 1926, pp. 1–24.

<sup>189</sup> "Find that Consumer knows little about buying Meats," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, January 1925.

<sup>190</sup> "Live Stock and Meat Board will push Studies of Meat," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, July 1925.

<sup>191</sup> "Beef Demonstration," *The Producer*, February 1930.

<sup>192</sup> "Official proceedings of the semi-annual meeting of the NLSMB," June 1930, p. 128, Box 290, NLSMB Records, AHC.



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<sup>193</sup> “Official proceedings of the semi-annual meeting of the NLSMB,” December 6, 1929, p. 34–35; 31; 37–39, Box 290, NLSMB Records, AHC.

<sup>194</sup> “Official proceedings of the semi-annual meeting of the NLSMB,” June 1930, p. 129–135, Box 290 NLSMB Records, AHC.

<sup>195</sup> “Official proceedings of the semi-annual meeting of the NLSMB,” December 6, 1930, p. 76–77, Box 290, NLSMB Records, AHC.

<sup>196</sup> “Official proceedings of the semi-annual meeting of the NLSMB,” December 6, 1929, p. 80, Box 290, NLSMB Records, AHC.

<sup>197</sup> “Official proceedings of the semi-annual meeting of the NLSMB,” December 6, 1929, p. 84, 30, Box 290 NLSMB Records, AHC.

<sup>198</sup> Horowitz, in *Putting Meat on the American Table*, 39–41, described retail butchers as refining “national beef” for the “local market.” He highlights their local character and fails to note that powerful forces—the Meat Board, the IAMP, the United Master Butcher’s Association—were actively nationalizing the retail butchers. As this chapter demonstrates, the national organizations were trying to bring order and efficiency to retailers of meat.

<sup>199</sup> “Official proceedings of the semi-annual meeting of the NLSMB,” December 6, 1929, p. 81–83, Box 290, NLSMB Records, AHC.

<sup>200</sup> Willard F. Williams, “A Note on ‘How the Marking of Beef Grades Was Obtained,’” *Journal of Farm Economics* 42, no. 4 (Nov., 1960): 884. Williams is critical of Rhodes article, but they both agree that retail reform was an essential goal of these organizations.

<sup>201</sup> V. James Rhodes, “How the Marking of Beef Grades Was Obtained,” *Journal of Farm Economics* 42 no. 1 (Feb., 1960): 133–149; Carolyn Dimitri, “Agricultural Marketing Institutions:

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A Response to Quality Disputes,” *Journal of Agricultural & Food Industrial Organization* 1 (1) (2003): 1–23.

<sup>202</sup> V. James Rhodes, “How the Marking of Beef Grades Was Obtained,” *Journal of Farm Economics* 42 no. 1 (Feb., 1960): 133–149; “Salt Lake Conference,” *The Producer*, February 1926, p. 6; Elmer Kiehl and V. James Rhodes, “Historical Development of Beef Quality and Grading Standards,” Research Bulletin 728 February 1960 University of Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, 26, 30.

<sup>203</sup> Clemen, *American Livestock*, 484–485.

<sup>204</sup> O. M. Plummer, Address, “Truth in Meats,” *The Producer*, February 1926, p. 6.

<sup>205</sup> Claude L. Douglas, *Cattle Kings of Texas*, (Austin, TX: State House Press, 1989), 93–94.

<sup>206</sup> “Retailers endorse Beef-Stamping,” *The Producer*, November 1926, p. 14.

<sup>207</sup> “Consumer of beef should be protected,” *The Producer*, November 1926, p. 16.

<sup>208</sup> James Poole, “The Problem of ‘Bad Beef,’” *The Producer*, March 1926, p. 1; Historians Allen Olmstead and Paul Rhode have categorized national resistance to BTb into three classes. Some stockmen questioned the science behind the testing, others questioned the costs and benefits as in the producer pays the highest cost while the consumer and packers benefit the most, and still others opposed the campaign because of the unprecedented federal intervention necessary. Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode, “Not on My Farm! Resistance to Bovine Tuberculosis Eradication in the United States,” *Journal of Economic History* 67, no. 3 (2007): 768–809.

<sup>209</sup> “TB Reactors slaughtered under meat inspection rules,” *The Producer*, June 1926.

<sup>210</sup> Poole, “The Problem of ‘Bad Beef.’”

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<sup>211</sup> “Movement to Further Beef Interests,” *The Producer*, February 1929, p. 13. This is probably why Thomas Wilson, the presidents of Armour and Swift, as well as the president of the IAMP, all attended the Better Beef Association meeting in 1929; Elmer Kiehl and V. James Rhodes, “Historical Development of Beef Quality and Grading Standards,” Research Bulletin 728 February 1960 University of Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, 20.

<sup>212</sup> “Retailers endorse Beef-Stamping,” *The Producer*, November 1926, p. 14.

<sup>213</sup> V. James Rhodes, “How the Marking of Beef Grades Was Obtained,” *Journal of Farm Economics* 42 no. 1 (Feb., 1960): 143.

<sup>214</sup> Memo, no date, Box 164 folder “Government Meat Grading (Permanent),” NLSMB Records, AHC; “Salt Lake City Convention,” *The Producer*, February 1926, p. 6.

<sup>215</sup> “Meat Board to help in Meat Grading,” *The Producer*, March 1927, p. 8.

<sup>216</sup> V. James Rhodes, “How the Marking of Beef Grades Was Obtained,” *Journal of Farm Economics* 42 no. 1 (Feb., 1960): 143.

<sup>217</sup> Rhodes, “How the Marking of Beef Grades,” 142.

<sup>218</sup> R. C. Pollock to T. H. Ingwersen, Swift and Co., May 11, 1927, Box 445 folder “Pollock, R. C. Correspondence re The Grading and Marking Committee, 1926-1927,” NLSMB Records, AHC; Elmer Kiehl and V. James Rhodes, “Historical Development of Beef Quality and Grading Standards,” Research Bulletin 728 February 1960 University of Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, 29.

<sup>219</sup> Oakleigh Thorne to R. C. Pollock, Dec. 18, 1926, Box 445 folder “Pollock, R. C. Correspondence re The Grading and Marking Committee, 1926-1927,” NLSMB Records, AHC.

<sup>220</sup> *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, March 1927.

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- <sup>221</sup> “Beef grading makes promising start,” *The Producer*, May 1927, p. 8.
- <sup>222</sup> “Beef grading makes promising start,” *The Producer*, May 1927, p. 8.
- <sup>223</sup> “Packer indorsement of Better Beef,” *The Producer*, October 1927, p. 12.
- <sup>224</sup> “Packer indorsement of Better Beef,” *The Producer*, October 1927, p. 8.
- <sup>225</sup> “Extend Meat Grading Service,” February 1928, *Meat and Live Stock Digest*.
- <sup>226</sup> Mollin to the Executive Committee of the ANLSA, January 28, 1931, Box 511 folder “Financial Files: Auditors Reports, 1930–1936” American Cattlemen’s Association Records, AHC.
- <sup>227</sup> Inger L. Stole, “Giving Consumers a Fair Chance: The Ideological Battle over Mandatory Grading in the 1930s and 1940s,” *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 48 no. 1 (Spring 2014): 34–5.
- <sup>228</sup> Schlebecker, *Cattle Raising*, 104.
- <sup>229</sup> “The Boston Beef Boycott,” *The Producer*, January 1928, p. 14.
- <sup>230</sup> “The Boston Beef Boycott,” *The Producer*, January 1928, p. 14.
- <sup>231</sup> No Title, *New York Times*, December 22, 1927, p. 40.
- <sup>232</sup> “Status of Consent decree,” *The Producer*, April 1930, p. 22.
- <sup>233</sup> George Clough to F. E. Mollin, April 25, 1930, Box 349 folder “Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931,” NCA Records, AHC.
- <sup>234</sup> Louis Swift to Herbert Hoover, June 6, 1929, Box 902 folder “Swift, L. F., 1929–1931, Swift and Company President,” Hoover Library.
- <sup>235</sup> “Status of Consent decree,” *The Producer*, April 1930, p. 22.
- <sup>236</sup> F. E. Mollin to Clough, April 29, 1930, Box 349 folder “Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931,” NCA Records, AHC; C. M. O’Donel to Mollin, April 25, 1930, Box 349 folder “Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931,” NCA Records, AHC.

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<sup>237</sup> F. E. Mollin to O'Donel and Bixby, April 19, 1930, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>238</sup> F. E. Mollin to O'Donel and Bixby, April 19, 1930, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>239</sup> O'Donel to Mollin, April 21, 1930, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>240</sup> Bixby to Mollin, April 29, 1930, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>241</sup> Bixby to Mollin, April 29, 1930, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>242</sup> Fred Bixby to Mollin, June 12, 1930; Mollin to Bixby, June 16, 1930, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC; O'Donel to Bixby, May 9, 1930, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>243</sup> Mollin to Bixby, June 16, 1930; Mollin to Sec of State Assoc., July 14, 1930, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>244</sup> No title, August 28, 1929, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>245</sup> Wentworth to Mollin, April 23, 1930, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>246</sup> Mollin to O'Donel, April 28, 1930, Box 349 folder "Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931," NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>247</sup> Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 155.

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<sup>248</sup> Clough to Mollin, June 11, 1930, Box 349 folder “Packers Consent decree of 1920, 1929–1931,” NCA Records, AHC.

<sup>249</sup> “Government Protests Modification of Consent decree,” *The Producer*, January 1932, p. 34; “Packers’ Consent decree,” *The Producer*, April 1932, p. 11.

<sup>250</sup> “Packers lose appeal to Supreme Court,” *The Producer*, March 1932, p. 10; “Consent decree,” *The Producer*, June 1932, p. 12; *United States v. Swift & Co.*, 286 U.S. 106 (1932).

<sup>251</sup> *U. S. v. Swift & Co.*, 286 U.S. 106 (1932); Melvin I. Urofsky, ed., *The Supreme Court Justices: A Biographical Dictionary* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), 39, 81–2, 297, 384, 486,

## **Chapter 4 - Building Associations: Producers, Packers, and the Federal Government**

In 1921, after only about two weeks in his new position as secretary of commerce, Herbert Hoover received a glowing letter of support from packing magnate Thomas Wilson. In the letter, Wilson expressed his desire to work closely with the new secretary. Wilson noted with delight that “the Department of Commerce is planning for very vigorous cooperation with American industries and specifically with the various commercial and trade organizations representing these industries.” Finally, Wilson told Hoover that “it gives me pleasure, as president of the Institute of American Meat Packers, to offer to you the cooperation of the meat packing industry of the United States. Any call from you will find prompt and vigorous response from the Institute.”<sup>252</sup> Hoover apparently never made that call and remained aloof from the meat packers and the livestock industry during his time as commerce secretary and as president. While the meat packers and livestock producers agreed with Hoover’s associationalist vision other issues kept Hoover and the meat and livestock industry apart.

In the 1920s and early 30s, producer and packer collaboration grew under the accommodating political order of associationalism. After WWI, the packers strengthened their own trade association and sought to work closer with producers and commission firms in coordinating the livestock industry. While packers and commission firms eagerly supported Hoover, producers held a grudge against him. Producer animosity toward packers thawed in the early twenties as seen in their subdued reaction to the Armour-Morris merger and their general concurrence with packers in opposing the McNary-Haugen bills. Packers, at least Armour and company, touted their friendliness to producers by supporting tariffs on livestock and related by-products. By the late 1920s, cattlemen and packers wholeheartedly supported Hoover’s Federal

Farm Board which put associational ideals into practice. The IAMP along with other industry leaders wanted to strengthen the Meat Board through a cooperative marketing plan that would have greatly increased the power of the packers in the livestock industry. Though livestock associations opposed the extended power for the packers, they approved an increase in fees to the Meat Board for advertising meat. The fee collection proved difficult due to intra-industry competition as well as the effects of the depression.

Throughout the 1920s the producers gradually lost faith in the government to help them and, with trepidation, looked for help from the big packers. The producers blamed Hoover and the Food Administration for the depressed state of the industry, they thought that the Packers and Stockyards Act lacked teeth, and they opposed the inclusion of cattle as a commodity to receive price support from the government. They instead looked to cooperative marketing as a solution to the farm problem.

After the Great War, Food Administrator Herbert Hoover began to formulate a plan for national development that centered on cooperation. In September 1919, less than five months after his return from Europe, he gave a speech outlining his plan to bring the US out of the semi-industrialized nineteenth century and into the fully rationalized industrial economy of the twentieth. His goal was to increase the American standard of living, but his means was unique.

Hoover later aptly described his national plan as a third way between capitalism and socialism. He thought that the standard of living could be gradually improved by increasing production and eliminating waste. Every gain in efficiency in farm or factory would mean more money for the worker as well as for the consumer. Not forgetting the employer, Hoover wanted a fair profit for them as well. The government then would play the role of umpire ensuring that business did not become too greedy and short the employee or the consumer. Government would



also serve as a partner to industry providing statistical information and other supports. More importantly for industry, the federal government would allow monopolies and oligopolies so long as they cooperated with other businesses and generally served the public good. Hoover wanted to avoid state controls and coercion, so his primary means of compulsion was by persuasion—appealing to self-interest and high ideals.<sup>253</sup>

The key players in this new economic system were the trade associations. Historian Joseph Bradley defined trade associations as “nonprofit organizations of business competitors in a single industry, formed to render a number of mutual-aid services in expanding that industry’s production, sales, and employment.” Trade associations were not new, they had been around since the mid-nineteenth century, but Hoover gave them new life. A trade association like the IAMP included the largest meat packers, such as Wilson and Armour, but also hundreds of smaller ones. Membership was voluntary and the association could not sanction members or compel them. As Bradley noted, the trade “association depends on the support of its members for authority, yet the association transcends the interests of any one member.” Members contributed money to it and abided by its decisions.<sup>254</sup> For Hoover, the associations could promote efficiency, foster better relations between employer and employee, stabilize industries, share statistics and best practices among members, and generally promote prosperity. They could also serve as points of contact between government and business.

President of Wilson packing company, Thomas E. Wilson was in full agreement with Hoover’s associationalism. Wilson had been one of the most outspoken proponents of cooperation with stockmen during the war on the packers and he also wanted greater cooperation between packers, which meant strengthening the meat packing trade association.

Wilson developed a plan for the IAMP that was in complete accord with Hoover's associationalist vision. Wilson wanted to expand greatly the IAMP. In a pamphlet addressed to fellow IAMP members he wrote that they should "recast [their] plans along the lines of enlarged activities and broader service." He wanted executives to be visionaries, stating that they needed to broaden their perspective. Executives, he wrote, especially needed a better understanding of the interrelations of their departments and their functions and a better understanding of how business as a whole related to world factors and social economics.

He shared Hoover's wish that cooperation should be about more than profit and should further the common good. These high ideals were evident in his desire that the packing industry would be guided by "service to one another and service to the public." To this end he wanted not only better relations among packers, but also with stockmen, retailers, and consumers. He wanted to foster loyalty to or even a love of the IAMP among its members. He told fellow packer executives that this trade association should be "my institute" and "your institute." Ultimately his goal was for the IAMP to function as a "combined trade association, industrial museum, research institute and educational institution." By industrial museum, he meant a place where other packers could physically see the layout and operation of the latest packing house technology and equipment.<sup>255</sup>

Wilson himself made the connection between his bold vision for the IAMP and Hoover's national development plan. Wilson told Hoover that "it is my belief that the aim of our proposed development plan is in harmony with the high ideas of industrial self-consciousness and industrial self-development expressed in your public utterances." He not only shared his plan with Hoover but also wanted his comments on it.<sup>256</sup> Clearly, Thomas Wilson and the IAMP shared the same associational vision as Hoover and desired to work closely with him.

Others within the livestock industry supported Hoover and his associationalist vision as well. Paul I. Aldrich, editor and manager of the *National Provisioner*, applauded “Mr. Wilson’s courageous action in bringing [the plan] out at this time.”<sup>257</sup> Everett C. Brown, president of the National Live Stock Exchange, enthusiastically supported Hoover. Within days of Hoover’s appointment as secretary of commerce, Brown wrote to congratulate him. He wrote on behalf of the twenty-seven exchanges he represented that “I cannot tell you how pleased we all are that you accepted the cabinet position as secretary of commerce.” He offered the assistance of the exchanges, even offering to help him pass any bills that he wanted. Hoover thanked him for the support of his organization. Brown knew Hoover through his work on the Food Administration as chairman of the stabilization and hog control committee.<sup>258</sup>

While Wilson and Brown supported Hoover, many producers still held a grudge against him because of his policies as Food Administrator. As mentioned previously, the ANLSA had supported the FTC investigation against the big packers during WWI. At the same time, Hoover, as chief of the Food Administration, largely defended the packers. Producers would have been upset with the FTC allegation that the Food Administration had been captured to an extent by the packers. The FTC revealed that three men in prominent positions within the Food Administration had close affiliations with the big five packers and were guilty of some form of impropriety. One Food Administration official who was also head of a Swift subsidiary had provided Swift with valuable insider information, but Hoover publicly defended his integrity and kept him on in his position despite lots of criticism. The FTC also revealed that the chief deputy to Joseph Cotton, head of the meat division, had helped the packers defend their business in the past and tipped off the packers to an impending large cattle order and asked them to keep cattle prices low. In addition to meatless days, producers would have had ample reason to dislike Hoover.<sup>259</sup>

After passage of the Packers and Stockyards Act in 1921, producers largely gave the packers a clean slate and let their past injustices go. However, with depressed livestock prices producers continued to blame Hoover and his Food Administration policies. The wartime overproduction—encouraged by Hoover—led to years of depressed livestock prices. It was not until about 1926 that prices began to return to a profitable basis for the industry. In fact, Wallace, Hoover, and most producers understood that the agricultural depression of the 1920s was due to wartime overproduction. When it came to parcel out responsibility for it, producers tended to blame Hoover.

Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace did not come to the aid of his rival, either. In fact, at the last ANLSA convention that Wallace attended before his untimely death, he fanned the flames of discontent. He told the assembled stockmen that they were “casualties of war.” Referring to the Food Administration’s policies he intoned, “we remember what happened during the war; we remember how they said: ‘produce—produce! Food will win the war!’ We remember how they said: ‘don’t eat wheat, don’t eat meat—they will win the war!’” He blamed the government, and by extension, Hoover, for the current depression. Wallace did not want the producers to forget who was responsible.<sup>260</sup> The contrast between Hoover and Henry C. Wallace in the eyes of stockmen could not have been starker. Henry Wallace—whom Hoover referred to as a “dour Scotsman”—had been a member of the ANLSA market committee and fought tirelessly against the packers, while Hoover headed the unpopular Food Administration and was accused of allowing the packers to infiltrate it.<sup>261</sup>

Hoover’s friends even warned him that his reputation suffered among cattlemen throughout the decade. President of the Live Stock Exchange, Everett C. Brown told Hoover that you “received considerable criticism from the livestock raisers of America, for doing what you

considered your duty during the war period, namely, to advise meatless days and conservation of meat products.” Incidentally, Brown and the livestock commission firms had supported Hoover’s meatless days. He recommended that Hoover try to patch up his relationship with producers by “advising each adult in the United States to consume one pound per week per capita of hog products and also one pound per week of wheat products.” Brown also thought that this would be a “master stroke” for the Republican Party. Hoover, however, did not think that public pronouncements of this sort would do any good.<sup>262</sup>

Later, in 1927, another friend warned Hoover that his reputation suffered greatly among cattlemen. Prominent Colorado lawyer, L. Ward Bannister was concerned that his friend had never really addressed the resentment that cattlemen held for him. He thought it was time that Hoover finally addressed “the charge of many western cattle-growers that the collapse of the cattle industry after the war was to a material extent due to you in that you got the people habituated to less meat during war times.” The reason for Bannister’s concern was due to what he had heard from an “intimate friend” who was chairman of the Meat Board for many years. His concerns were justified. Even as late as 1933, Secretary of the ANLSA F. E. Mollin said that the livestock industry had “never entirely recovered from the meatless days prescribed during war times.” Bannister told Hoover that the Meat Board chairman had “heard this charge from many sources and for quite a while and he thinks it has been doing a good deal of harm among the cattlemen of the West.” He urged Hoover to speak at the upcoming ANLSA convention, but Hoover declined. Hoover also denied the fact that the Food Administration led to a decrease in meat consumption and claimed to have statistical evidence backing up the claim.<sup>263</sup>

Packer executives at Armour cast the Food Administration as a bogeyman and as the reason for the Armour-Morris merger. After the war Morris, the third largest meatpacking company in

the US found itself in serious financial trouble. J. Ogden Armour, head of Armour company, the second largest of the meatpackers, contemplated purchasing Morris and Co. and told Secretary Wallace about it in the Fall of 1922. Armour most likely wanted to know whether Wallace would take action, under the authority of the Packers and Stockyards Act, to prevent the merger. Armour explained how stockmen and consumers would both benefit if Armour could take over Morris because Armour could increase its volume to match its overhead, saving money, and passing those savings on to both ends of the meat industry. Wallace, after advice from the attorney general, declared that the Packers and Stockyards Act did not expressly forbid the purchase of one packing company by another but stated that he may take action in the future if the results of the merger violated the act. Producers generally opposed the merger, fearing that it would reduce competition at the central markets.<sup>264</sup> They reasoned that this clearly led in the direction of monopoly—going from the big five to the big four packers—and feared the precedent that would be set.

Secretary Wallace eventually took legal action, and James Poole, editor of *The Producer*, thought that Wallace only belatedly filed a complaint against the merger due to pressure from stockmen. The basis of his complaint was that this would create a monopoly and therefore violated the Packers and Stockyards Act. Hearings began in April of 1923 and concluded in October 1924. Meanwhile, Wallace had died and had been replaced by William Jardine who upheld the merger in September 1925.<sup>265</sup> Jardine upheld it for several reasons. For one, he found that most of those affected by the merger supported it; he concluded that the Packers and Stockyards Act did not prevent one competitor from purchasing the assets of another; and he also reasoned that Congress understood the meat industry conditions when it passed the bill, meaning that it knew that a merger of this kind was likely. Many farmers, however, also thought that the government should have prevented it from happening in the first place.<sup>266</sup>

Stockmen opposed the merger, but never fought it with the same intensity that they brought against the packers during the war on the packers. In 1922, when news of the proposed merger first broke, *The Producer* noted that “sentiment among stockmen is almost unanimously against [it],” and also that some stockmen doubted “the wisdom of interference by the government.” At the ANLSA annual convention in January 1923, the organization passed a resolution calling the merger “detrimental to the interests of both producer and consumer.” Secretary Wallace initially defended the merger on the grounds that it would increase efficiency and the savings would be passed on to producers—the same argument used by Armour. Murdo McKenzie, renowned ranch manager, represented many stockmen when he disagreed with the secretary of agriculture and instead explained that a post-merger Armour would still buy livestock “as cheaply as they can” and he feared that “supply and demand is the only thing that will rule that one question.”<sup>267</sup>

As part of the merger, Armour and Company restructured and named a new president, F. Edson White, who stockmen may have liked better than J. Ogden Armour. White was a talented administrator and also appealed directly to stockmen. He had grown up on a livestock farm and was familiar with the problems of producers. Apparently, he was cut from the same cloth as Thomas E. Wilson. *The Producer* described him as “possess[ing] the same engaging personality as Wilson.” Armour official Edward Wentworth lumped White and Wilson together stating that they were the “two packers . . . who most nearly understand production problems and are most thoroughly cognizant of the services they can render the stockmen.”<sup>268</sup> White’s personality and background may have assuaged producer’s fears.

In 1923, F. Edson White and Armour and Company defended the merger to the public by laying all of the blame on the Food Administration. White claimed that the Food Administration exercised a great deal of control over the packing industry during the war and left them high and

dry after it. In a public statement, White said that the government “controlled them during the war; compelled them to buy raw products at the highest prices in history; encouraged production to a point which filled their cellars with the costliest products; and left the packers with these high cost stocks when the government relinquished control and dumped its war surplus in such fashion as to ruin the market for the stocks which the packers had been compelled to buy.”<sup>269</sup> Armour and Company also printed a fifteen-page pamphlet for the “the thinkers of the nation” that explained in greater detail how the government created the current financial difficulties for the packing industry.

White’s statement was reprinted in *the Producer* and editor Poole wrote that “there is logic in White’s contentions” because costs of processing and distribution had risen.<sup>270</sup> Indeed, White’s claim may have resonated with producers who were not inclined to trust the Food Administration.

Still, producers condemned the merger at their annual meeting in January 1924 and again in 1925. The 1924 resolution claimed the merger violated the Packers and Stockyards Act and that it was a precedent for other mergers of big packers. At least one stockman voiced concern over the resolution. He argued that stockmen should try to understand the economic reasons for the merger before condemning it. He would rather have seen one financially strong packing company than two weak ones.<sup>271</sup> Even so, in 1925, the ANLSA asked for amendments to the Packers and Stockyards Act that would specifically grant greater power to the secretary of agriculture to regulate the packers.<sup>272</sup>

After Secretary Jardine upheld the merger, *The Producer* featured an article on it that showed resignation to the decision and perhaps even understanding. The article noted Armour’s argument that the acquisition, as they called it—not a merger—would reduce overhead and expenses and pass the savings on to the consumer and the producer. Besides, the author reasoned,



Morris would have gone bankrupt anyway. Of White's argument, *the Producer* author conceded that "we admit its forcefulness." The author also noted that this would still give Armour below twenty-five percent of market share, meaning that the firm would still be second behind Swift. In addition to the time and money spent on the hearings, *the Producer* opposed the precedent that the merger set and feared that maybe all big five would merge until a "Super big one" was left.<sup>273</sup> Though resigned to the merger, the ANLSA officially viewed it as a major failure of the Packers and Stockyards Act.<sup>274</sup>

There may have been more to the Armour-Morris merger than simply helping Armour to increase its efficiency. In 1933, Arthur G. Leonard, president of the Chicago Union Stockyards wrote a series of memos about the Armour takeover of Morris by the owner of the Union Stockyards. One of the memos makes some serious claims but the author was not identified. However, given that other similar memos in the collection are attributed to Leonard it seems reasonable to assume that he authored this one as well. The memo claims that in 1918 or 1919, J. Ogden Armour used money from Armour's working capital for his own "private investments." At one point, J. Ogden owed his company as much as fifty-four million dollars. The author claimed that the restructuring during the Armour-Morris merger offered a way for Armour Company and Chase National Bank to attempt to clear up the situation without notifying stockholders of J. Ogden's indiscretions. As part of the restructuring, the company created a Voting Trust of Common Stock and a Finance Committee, both of which were controlled by the same group: a representative of Chase National Bank, the Continental and Commercial National Bank, and J. Ogden Armour. The author of the memo thought that the banks would not allow anyone outside of the "inner circle" to serve as a director of Armour in order to hide J. Ogden's actions as well as some other unethical and illegal activity.<sup>275</sup>

By the early 1920s, many leading producers were becoming disillusioned with the federal government. They blamed it for the depressed state of agriculture, and they witnessed their prized regulatory law fail to prevent a merger of two of the big packers. In another instance, producers leaned toward packers in their efforts to thwart the McNary-Haugen bill, which would have increased the scope of federal involvement in the farm sector.

All of agriculture, not just the livestock industry, was in a depressed state after World War I and one of the most popular and controversial plans put forth to help American agriculture was the McNary-Haugen plan. The Farm Bureau and most American farmers supported the plan, which called for the federal government to determine the average domestic consumption of certain commodities and sell the excess on the world market. In theory, American farmers would receive higher prices due to the artificially contracted supply. High tariffs would protect the products of American farms from cheaper foreign crops. The federal government would sell the domestic surplus to other countries at the world price and whatever money the government lost in selling at the lower global price would be paid by farmers through an “equalization fee.” Supporters of the plan thought that domestic prices would be so high that the equalization fee would not hurt farmers.<sup>276</sup>

The big packers generally opposed the bill as exemplified in a letter written in part by Thomas E. Wilson. In January 1922, Secretary of Agriculture Henry C. Wallace appointed a committee of fourteen to study and report on the McNary-Haugen plan. By February of the same year, Thomas Wilson and three other members of the committee wrote a letter to Wallace that was highly critical of the plan. Many of their conclusions were echoed by other opponents of the plan for the rest of the decade. They thought that protected crops would be overproduced, that it would necessitate the “creation of a vast bureaucratic organization” that would make commodity

protection a political decision, that it would disrupt American foreign trade, that well-established marketing channels would be destroyed, that livestock could not be protected because its products were “highly perishable,” and the difficulty of tying the price of one commodity like corn to another like livestock. They claimed that ninety percent of corn was used to feed livestock.<sup>277</sup> In 1924, Norman Draper, representing the IAMP, echoed these misgivings in his testimony opposing passage of McNary-Haugen bill before the House Committee on Agriculture.<sup>278</sup>

Secretary of Commerce Hoover was also given a copy of the plan in January 1922 and reached similar conclusions. After analysis, his staff thought that it would lead to higher prices for consumers and that it would be difficult to maintain parity between agricultural and manufactured goods. In addition to his staff’s findings, Hoover thought it would lead to, in the words of historian Gary Koerselman, an “inflationary spiral” that in the end would hurt farmers.<sup>279</sup>

President Calvin Coolidge agreed with Hoover and looked to him for advice on agricultural matters. After the McNary Haugen bill passed Congress in 1927 and 1928, Coolidge vetoed it based on reasons that echoed Hoover and Thomas E. Wilson. Coolidge thought that the equalization fee was unconstitutional and that the bill would create a vast bureaucracy. He also argued that it would help grain farmers at the expense of dairy farmers. Farmers, Coolidge foresaw, would have no reason to curb production under the proposed law and this would only compound the surplus problem.<sup>280</sup> While Coolidge issued the veto message, it closely resembled Herbert Hoover’s views.

In 1928, as Congress again considered the McNary-Haugen plan, another representative of the packers, Louis D. H. Weld, manager of the commercial research department for Swift and Company, outlined a number of similar objections as Wilson and Hoover in an essay called, “Does the Farmer need help?” He wrote that if the bill was successful, then it would raise the price of

food for consumers and, in agreement with Hoover and Coolidge, it would lead to overproduction and create a “complicated and tremendous government machinery.” He also added that the legalization of “dumping” surplus commodities would cause other nations to take “retaliatory measures against the U.S.”<sup>281</sup>

Historians disagree about how stockmen reacted to the McNary-Haugen plan. John Schlebecker maintained that Plains cattlemen supported it half-heartedly while historians Charles Wood, Theodore Saloutos and John Hicks suggest that farmers overwhelmingly supported it, including cattlemen.<sup>282</sup> According to convention records and its monthly journal, the ANLSA did not view the McNary-Haugen plan as essential. Other issues appear in the convention records with much greater frequency than discussions or news of the McNary-Haugen plan. Thus, Schlebecker’s claim of half-hearted support could be applied to the ANLSA.

Both historians Wood and Schlebecker state that cattlemen supported McNary-Haugen because it would raise beef prices. However, this statement is contradicted in a speech given by Senator Kendrick, the former president of the ANLSA. Kendrick endorsed the principles of the McNary-Haugen bill but did not think it was good for cattle. In the original version of the McNary-Haugen Act, cattle were included on the list of commodities that would be purchased and dumped on the foreign market. Senator Kendrick was credited with getting cattle removed from this list prior to its passage in 1928. It should be noted that a number of prominent cattlemen, including Dan Casement and William J. Tod, even opposed the principles of the plan.<sup>283</sup>

In a speech before the Senate, Kendrick explained why McNary-Haugen would not help cattlemen and what sort of help they really needed. He was “favorable” to the plan for crops like “wheat, corn, and cotton,” but not for cattle. Primarily, Kendrick did not want cattle included because of meat’s perishable nature. He was concerned that the meat would reach the consumer in

a poor state and would have the opposite effect—it would turn people away from beef. He did not believe that there was an excess of cattle in the U.S. but thought that the chief problem for cattlemen was “the increased cost of production.” He blamed increased taxes, labor costs, and freight rates, but he especially blamed the “feed bill—either pasture, forage, or grain.” He also pointed to the necessity—now that the free range was diminishing—of immense capital investments in land and equipment. He told his fellow senators that beef was under consumed and that many forces, chief among them the purveyors of “breakfast food,” have “discourage[ed] the use of beef products.” He went on to say how those within the industry were cooperating to combat the bad publicity that was severely harming beef consumption.<sup>284</sup>

In his speech, he also subtly approved of the big packers and the status quo. In his explanation of why cattle should not be included in the list of protected commodities, he stated that no “improvement whatsoever could be made in the delivery of the product in foreign markets” because of the “present efficient system of preparation and distribution.” He went on to say that the present system of distribution to the consumer was “not the work of a day; it is the work of more than half a century of constructive development.” While he never mentioned the big packers by name, he was clearly referring to them. He praised the “science in salvaging the waste of by-products,” which was a function of the big packers. He concluded that the McNary-Haugen bill would “inject” an “additional complication” into the “intricate machinery” of the livestock distribution system and “would result in impossible confusion and derangement to the whole system.” He was clearly a man who was happy with the way things were and did not want government interference.<sup>285</sup>

The big packers and Hoover realized that protecting cattlemen from foreign competition was important. Cattlemen fought throughout the 1920s to get Congress to raise the tariff on hides

and feared the entrance of Argentine cattle products into the American market. Argentine beef was of a high quality and was cheaper than American beef because of the cheaper land and labor costs in that South American country. For the time being, the U.S. had an embargo on Argentine meat due to the prevalence of foot and mouth disease there, but cattlemen feared the day when Argentina would eradicate that disease from its herds. In 1929, the president of the ANLSA assured fellow stockmen that recently elected President Hoover said that he would only lower the tariffs if American farmers were not producing enough food for domestic consumption. The ANLSA president was satisfied with this position, stating “this is all we could ask for.”<sup>286</sup> In early 1933, shortly before Franklin D. Roosevelt took office, the ANLSA still favored tariff protection and was raising money to, as Fred Bixby put it, “to send people to Washington to fight for us” for protection.<sup>287</sup>

Armour president F. Edson White took the occasion of the tariff to come across as magnanimous to the producers. White stated that he favored free trade in principle but would not support it until all countries adopted it. This statement probably put producers at ease because there were no signs that the nations of the world were suddenly going to drop all of their tariffs. However, he also mentioned economic reasons. He said that Armour packing plants operated below full capacity so the importation of meat would only reduce the volume of livestock slaughtered at his plants. This means that White thought that a lower tariff on livestock would hurt his business. White admitted, however, that one of his plants would profit from the free entry of Canadian livestock but stated that “I should prefer to sacrifice this for the purpose of cooperating with the producer.”<sup>288</sup> Based on White’s explanation, it appears that free trade would have been a net loss for Armour at the time. He nonetheless made it seem to producers as if his company was taking a financial loss solely for the producer’s welfare. The highly protectionist Hawley-Smoot

tariff that Hoover signed into law the next year drastically reduced livestock imports. This tariff, for example, crippled the Canadian livestock industry.<sup>289</sup>

Other major farm organizations were torn by different approaches to help the farmer. The Farm Bureau and the Farmer's Union were both national farmers organizations but with different aims and member demographics. The Farm Bureau represented "commercially oriented and profitable farmers and businessmen" and viewed farming as a business. It also enjoyed a close relationship with the state through county agents and the extension system. The Farmer's Union, which predated the Farm Bureau by roughly a decade, appealed to poorer farmers. It maintained a much broader interest in reform movements than the narrowly focused Farm Bureau. Farmer's Union policies tended to be more radical than the more bourgeois Farm Bureau. For instance, in the early 1920s, when the Farm Bureau advocated greater farm efficiency, the Farmer's Union called for withholding crops from the market until prices rose.<sup>290</sup>

In its early years, the Farm Bureau leaned toward cooperative marketing and associationalism but later it shifted to support the McNary-Haugen plan. This shift happened in the Farm Bureau presidential election of 1922. James R. Howard, president of the Farm Bureau until 1922, opposed the McNary-Haugen plan and was alienated from the Farm Bureau because of his opposition. As a supporter of associationalism in agriculture, he worked with some of the same powerful people that the cattlemen did. He worked with packing magnate Thomas Wilson on at least two occasions and was friends with Herbert Hoover. Howard also supported Coolidge in his veto of the bill. The Farmer's Union was split between support of cooperatives and associationalism and support of the McNary-Haugen plan until its presidential election of 1930 when John Simpson—a charismatic leader and supporter of direct government price supports—won out.<sup>291</sup>

In the debate over solutions to the farm problem, cattlemen aligned more with Hoover, Coolidge, and the packers than with supporters of the McNary-Haugen plan, such as the Farm Bureau. Cattlemen supported cooperative marketing and indirect government assistance over more direct government measures.

In seeking a solution to the farm problem of the 1920s, cattlemen tended to align with Hoover's plan of cooperative marketing under the auspices of the Federal Farm Board. Hoover conceived of the idea based on the lessons that he drew from his experience as Food Administrator. As one historian noted, Hoover learned "that out of the high costs of distribution could be wrung great savings that would solve the farm problem simply and also reduce the cost of living to consumers." This historian also noted that Hoover's "wartime experience had given him a low opinion of governmental price management and a conviction that private associations should and could bring order into areas of economic disorder."<sup>292</sup> Even as secretary of commerce he promoted the Federal Farm Board as a limited government alternative to the McNary-Haugen Act. He persuaded President Coolidge to hold an agricultural conference in the mid-1920s packed with anti-McNary-Haugenites who not surprisingly recommended the Federal Farm Board. Not until 1929 did a Farm Board bill pass Congress and it became law as the Agricultural Marketing Act.

The Agricultural Marketing Act embodied Hoover's associationalist ideas and was supported by the ANLSA. The Act sought to place agriculture on "a basis of economic equality with other industries" in several ways. The four ways proposed under the act to achieve this end included "preventing inefficient and wasteful methods of distribution," encouraging producers to form "producer-owned and producer-controlled cooperative associations," and by controlling surpluses of agricultural commodities.<sup>293</sup> The Farm Board consisted of eight members who were appointed by the president and were supposed to reflect the major agricultural interests of the



nation. The Act also provided for a revolving fund of \$500,000,000 that the Board could loan to cooperative associations to help them stabilize production.<sup>294</sup> *The Producer* was optimistic about the Act after it was first passed, even describing McNary-Haugen supporters as “sulking.”

The ANLSA supported the work of the Farm Board. C. B. Denman, “owner and operator of a large livestock ranch near Farmington, Missouri,” served as the livestock representative on the Farm Board. Denman was president of the National Live Stock Producer’s Association and a member of the ANLSA executive committee.<sup>295</sup> ANLSA secretary Mollin was involved in Farm Board meetings in Chicago as a representative of the ANLSA to organize the National Live Stock Marketing Association (NLSMA). This producer-owned and producer-controlled association served as the central agency for regional producer’s marketing associations. Mollin served as “director at large” for the NLSMA.

The ANLSA also supported the creation of a regional producers marketing association. The ANLSA called a meeting of stockmen in the intermountain region in Denver and created the Intermountain Live Stock Marketing Association. Mollin told ANLSA executives that they spent the first few weeks “fending off attacks.” He explained that “the commission men and yard traders are throwing every possible obstacle in the way of this cooperative agency, the latest development being the refusal to allow its cattle to go through the auction ring at the annual feeder sale.” Mollin also stated that the “packer buyers”—whether large or small packers is unclear—tried to frustrate the operation of the marketing association but stopped after producers complained.<sup>296</sup> Commission firms especially felt singled out by the Farm Board and Hoover for economic chastisement.

Cooperative marketing could bring about greater cooperation with packers, as was the case in California. Mr. Farr, president of the California Live Stock Association, expressed his deep appreciation for the National Live Stock Marketing Association for helping to establish regional

credit and marketing associations in the West. He explained that the California cooperative marketing association, the Western Cattle Marketing Association, which was begun in 1927, was so efficient because their salesmen are “in constant contact with the packers and they know their demand for the weeks kill so that we are not offering the packer anything they don’t want.” In other words, their salesmen “anticipate the packers need.” Farr was very satisfied with the packers. He also said that the California association had an advantage over the Union Stock Yards because they knew what the packer wanted even before the Yards opened. He claimed that ninety-five percent of their business “comes direct from ranch to the packer.”<sup>297</sup> Bypassing the middleman was great for producer and packer, but not for the commission men or the stockyards.

As mentioned previously, Hoover wanted to do away with waste in distribution. The Agricultural Marketing Act explicitly set out as a goal the elimination of waste in distribution, which seemed to target the middlemen in agriculture. Thus, the act placed pressure on any business that existed between the cattleman and the consumer to become more efficient. Producers, too, even before the hard times, complained that there were too many middlemen in the livestock industry. In 1929, former ANLSA president Fred Bixby and Armour President F. Edson White both agreed that commission men, railroads, stockyards, retailers, and others were taking too much of the producer’s dollar. Bixby guessed that there were “from fourteen to twenty-four steps between the man who produces the steer and the man who eats the steak.” He called this an outrage and held the solution to be the creation of a producer controlled “cooperative Marketing Association” that shipped “direct to the packer.” Shipping direct to the packer meant bypassing the stockyards and thus bypassing the commission men and the various stockyard fees—cutting out the middleman entirely.<sup>298</sup>

By 1929, some livestock raisers had already begun to ship directly to the packer, which in addition to bypassing the commission firms and stockyards, also bypassed government regulation. Packers, especially in the north central US, built buying stations and concentration yards in the country where producers could sell their livestock without shipping to a terminal market. This was known as “direct buying” and was highly controversial for several reasons. Clearly, the stockyards companies and commission firms opposed it because not only did the practice take away their business, but it rendered them totally obsolete. Packers also fostered direct buying because of competition from cooperative shipping associations. Some stockmen, however, approved of the system because they thought it was more efficient and they liked the freedom of choice to ship to a stockyard or to a packer directly. However, some opposed direct buying because it circumvented the Packers and Stockyards Act—the Secretary of Agriculture had no statutory authority to inspect the transaction outside of the stockyards. Also, it placed the producer even more at the mercy of the packer than he or she would have been at the stockyards before the Packers and Stockyards Act. Direct buying helped the packers and hurt the commission men, stockyard companies, and cooperative shipping associations.

Commission firms complained to President Hoover and blocked the operation of the NLSMA. For instance, the St. Louis Livestock Exchange, upset that the Farm Board supported a producer’s cooperative operating in St. Louis, wrote to Hoover about this “ruthless bureaucratic effort to destroy [their] business.” The forty-one firms of this Livestock Exchange called themselves “oppressed American citizens” asking for a “square deal.” They stated that “we are in the intolerable position of paying taxes to support the Federal Farm Board, a bureau which is using its official position and government money to exterminate us.”<sup>299</sup> Similarly, a commission firm from Chicago asked Hoover how private enterprise could possibly survive against “government

aided competition.” The firm questioned whether the Farm Board actually had a “legal right” to give “moral support” or “financial aid” to the NLSMA.<sup>300</sup> The St. Louis commission firms took action and boycotted the producer’s cooperative in their city’s stockyards.

Denman denied that the Farm Board was attempting to run the commission firms out of business, but his reasoning was probably not reassuring to them. In a letter explaining the situation behind the St. Louis commission firm boycott, Denman told Hoover that the decision to run the commission firms out of business did not rest with the Farm Board but with the producers themselves. If they chose to take their business elsewhere the Farm Board would not save the commission firms. In a 1931 address to the ANLSA, Denman was even more direct when he told the stockmen, “anything that stands between you and that customer which is wasteful and inefficient should be eliminated.”<sup>301</sup>

Producers and packers supported Hoover’s Farm Board late into Hoover’s term—when many farmers and stockmen had turned against it. An article from September 1932 in *The Producer*, the official organ of the ANLSA, condemned the “organized commission men” that attacked the Farm Board. The author called their “propaganda . . . well financed” and “unparalleled in viciousness.” The author also answered the commission firm argument that federal support of producer cooperatives equaled government competition with private business. He defended government support of cooperatives as an “indirect subsidy” in keeping with American traditions.<sup>302</sup> The packers and retailers seemed to support the Farm Board as well. In 1931, representatives of the Institute of American Meat Packers and the National Retailers Association attended the annual banquet of the National Live Stock Marketing Association as its “guests.”<sup>303</sup>

Leading figures in the livestock industry wanted to broaden the powers of the cooperative marketing association, the Meat Board. In 1929, at the National Western Live Stock Show in

Denver, about 200 representatives of the livestock industry discussed how to promote their common interests. They created a committee that consisted of wealthy Angus breeder, Oakleigh Thorne; Dan Casement, champion Hereford breeder; president of the National Live Stock Exchange, Everett C. Brown; and two others. This committee developed a plan to boost meat consumption and to stabilize the livestock industry. Thorne and his colleagues wanted the plan carried out by the National Live Stock and Meat Board and sought industry-wide approval for it. While the committee members consisted of producers, exchange representatives, and professors from agricultural colleges their plan contemplated giving substantial market power to the packers.<sup>304</sup>

The plan—at least the version submitted to the IAMP—was highly favorable to the packers. In several instances, it mentioned the packer’s “narrow” margin of profit. It stated that because most of the benefit from strengthening the Meat Board would accrue to the stockmen, then the stockmen would have to pay for most of it. As the plan stated, “the financial responsibility in the proposal at hand is chiefly the stockman’s.” It also acknowledged “the contribution the packer already has made along a line of which the grant to the Russel Sage foundation and others for the Stefansson experiment is a conspicuous example.” This referred to a \$25,000 grant by the IAMP to study the effect of an all meat diet on Arctic explorer Dr. Stefansson.<sup>305</sup>

The most ambitious part of the plan would have given packers tremendous power within the industry. The Thorne plan asked that the packer “should help the hundreds of thousands of persons sending him their raw materials to integrate their individual policies, as far as possible, with an effective stabilization and production program.” The packers, the plan stated, should help adjust production to demand and demand to production. While the plan did not go into specifics,

it implied that the packer would tell the producer when to ship his stock to the slaughterhouse and when to wait.<sup>306</sup>

Not surprisingly, the IAMP approved of its increased power as proposed by the Thorne plan. In fact, some leaders in the livestock industry claimed that the entire plan was ghostwritten by the president of the IAMP, William W. Woods. NLSMB member Joseph Mercer claimed that “every word of the [Thorne plan was] prepared by Mr. Woods.”<sup>307</sup> Whether Woods was responsible for the content of the plan may never be known, but if the plan is compared to Wood’s address to the producers of the American National of that same year, then it becomes clear that he agreed wholeheartedly with the idea of packer leadership. He called for the need of the “adjustment of production to demand” and said that the violent fluctuations in price was more of a producer than a packer problem, but that the packers were eager to assist in the matter. He asked producers to think of the meat industry as “one business with three main divisions:” a “production division,” a “manufacturing and wholesale” division, and a “retailing division.”<sup>308</sup> Woods was at least repeating the main ideas of the Thorne plan to the producers.

The Meat Board, meanwhile, rejected the Thorne plan after feedback from about twenty livestock associations. The Thorne committee had first given its proposal to the IAMP, which endorsed it if a specified list of livestock associations also approved it. The Meat Board asked many of these associations to report on the Thorne plan and of the twenty that responded, none seemed to give wholehearted approval. However, many of them supported the plan’s proposal for an advertising campaign as well as a collection of funds from cattle sales, but not for the full amount that the plan called for. Most associations supported a twenty-five cent collection made at the point of sale to commission firms or packers on carloads of livestock.<sup>309</sup>

Faced with resolutions rejecting the plan but supporting a raise in collection fees, the Meat Board decided to pursue its own course. The Board voted to inform the Thorne committee that it could not follow through on its plan because many livestock associations had found it unacceptable at the time. The Board also decided to ask for the collection of twenty-five cents per carload for its own use in promoting meat consumption. Commission firms across the country had already been collecting five cents per carload for the Meat Board, though based on the Meat Board's own estimate, only about seventy percent of the possible funds were being collected. The fees were not paid by the commission firms but from the producers—the commission agent was simply responsible for collecting it. In keeping with associationalism, this was a voluntary collection. The Meat Board made agreements with individual commission firms and livestock exchanges across the country to collect the money at their local stockyard. The Meat Board had no other way besides persuasion to compel the commission firms to agree to make collections. Once a given firm agreed to make the collection it was taken from stockmen upon the sale of their stock. However, the producer always had the option to refuse the collection and he or she would be refunded.<sup>310</sup>

Gaining support for quintupling the existing fee proved difficult. At a special session, a committee of the Meat Board discussed ways to convince farmers and small packers to pay and collect the new fee. The committee consisted of Everett Brown, R. C. Pollock, Charles Carey, Joseph Mercer—as chairman—and three others. There were packers not collecting in Detroit, Salina, KS, St. Louis and many other locations. The Farmer's Union seemed particularly hostile to the fee increase. It stopped collecting the fee in Omaha, Nebraska, and was not collecting in Kansas City, and other terminal markets. The Farmer's Union in Kansas was only collecting five cents and one of its leaders, a Mr. Hobbs, told Mercer that the members of his group said that they

could not afford the charge and that they viewed it as just another way to take away their money.

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The unfriendliness displayed by the Farmer's Union toward the Meat Board probably stemmed from its hostility toward the Farm Bureau and the competition between the Farmer's Union cooperative marketing organizations and the National Livestock Producers Association. As mentioned previously, in the early 1920s, the committee of fifteen created the National Livestock Producers Association that established cooperative commission and shipping companies at central stockyards. The NLPA was closely connected with the Farm Bureau. The point of contention was that the Farmer's Union had already established cooperative commission and shipping firms at many stockyards throughout the nation and it was not long before the NLPA was in direct competition with the Farmer's Union. A number of Farmer's Union leaders thought that the NLPA sought to exterminate their cooperative companies and vehemently opposed them. William Hirth, leader of the Missouri Farmers Association, stated that his group and the Farmer's Union were "solidly arrayed against" the NLPA and that they formed an "iron clad coalition against the job hunting [Farm] Bureau leaders." The NLPA dutifully collected the twenty-five-cent fee that the Meat Board asked for while Farmer's Union cooperatives did not. In 1931, because the Farmer's Unions' resistance to collection threatened all collections, the board members voted to add a Farmer's Union representative to the Meat Board.<sup>312</sup>

Most upsetting to the special committee was that the IAMP would not even endorse the new collection. The special committee believed that the IAMP would not endorse the plan due to a personal grudge. The task of collecting the fees would have been much simpler for the Board if the IAMP gave its blessing to it and encouraged its members to pay, but that was not the case at first. Mercer thought that William Whitfield Woods, president of the IAMP, was upset that the



Thorne plan was turned down. Everett C. Brown, one of the Thorne plan committee members, thought that the IAMP would tell its packer members that it was not cooperating with the Meat Board and that they did not have to pay the fee. Brown claimed that “Woods is the man who is so jealous of this whole organization”—meaning the Meat Board. The special committee thought that Woods prevented the smaller packers from cooperating out of spite. On the other hand, the big packers, Thomas Wilson and Gustavus Swift, for instance, still wholeheartedly supported the Meat Board. Although the special committee wanted Wilson to pressure the IAMP to cooperate, Wilson would not do it, most likely because he thought it would do more harm than good.<sup>313</sup>

Collection of the fee was also complicated by competition between stockyards, between cooperative commission firms and “old line” firms, and between direct buyers and stockyards. In 1931, the Meat Board’s greatest obstacle to gaining widespread support was the St. Paul, Minnesota market. According to Everett C. Brown, former president of the National Live Stock Exchange, the producer cooperative commission firms refused to make the collection in St. Paul, but the “old line commission people would make the charge if they would.”<sup>314</sup> The term old line was used to distinguish the typical commission company from one that was owned by farmers or stockmen. The producer cooperative commission firms—many of which were created under the auspices of the Federal Farm Board—took business away from the “old line” commission firms. Therefore, the old-line firms feared a greater loss of business if they collected an extra twenty-five cents per carload while the cooperative firms did not.

The Meat Board viewed St. Paul as the lynchpin to getting many other markets to make the collection. For instance, the Chicago livestock exchange would not make the collection until the direct buyers of Iowa would. As mentioned previously, direct buying was when packer’s purchased livestock from the producer without the middlemen—the commission firms. The so-

called “interior Iowa packers” were not making the collection on their direct purchases and therefore the Chicago commission firms refused to do so until they did. The Iowa packers were also in direct competition with St. Paul and would not collect until St. Paul would. Another representative of commission firms who sat on the Meat Board also explained that markets in South Dakota would not collect until St. Paul would.<sup>315</sup> Apparently, the only the commission firms that refused to collect at St. Paul was the Central Cooperative, which was a farmer-owned livestock commission firm. The Meat Board desperately wanted this firm to make the collection because it prevented the rest of the St. Paul firms from collecting, which prevented a host of other markets from collecting. One of the Meat Board members suggested that they should “fish for an invitation” to their next meeting and attempt to persuade them to collect the fee.<sup>316</sup>

According to members of the Meat Board, reasons for resistance to the collection varied. The Farmer’s Union, which had its own farmer-owned livestock commission companies, generally opposed the collections. Joseph Mercer, for example, found its representative in Kansas City favorable, but he said it was the Farmer’s Union board of directors that would oppose it. Mercer also told the Meat Board that the Grange members tended to view it cynically as just another way to get the farmer’s money. Mercer also found that some of the agencies were “of strong belief that it [was] a packer’s project entirely.” He explained that he had “tried to convince them that it was not.” The Board attributed much of the resistance to ignorance of the Meat Board and its purpose in collecting the fee, which led to greater efforts at publicity among stockmen.<sup>317</sup>

Resistance was probably due to more than simply ignorance of the Meat Board. By 1931, farm prices were so low that banks foreclosed on many farms and farmers could barely make ends meet. Many farmers began to view cooperative marketing as a failed experiment. The Farmer’s Union, for one, turned on Hoover’s Federal Farm Board and instead wanted direct government

price supports for produce. It did not help matters that the Farm Board provided funding for a livestock commission firm in St. Joseph, Missouri that was in direct competition with the Farmer's Union commission firm there. They wanted the government to pay the cost of production plus a profit.<sup>318</sup>

Perhaps a better sense of resistance can be gleaned from the actions of the Farm Holiday Association that was active in the Midwest in the early 1930s. Discontent with packers was high in Iowa where the state enforced mandatory bovine tuberculosis testing. Many Iowa farmers viewed the testing as a scam by the veterinarians and the packers because the packers could purchase the cows that reacted positively to the tuberculosis test at a greatly reduced price. Farmers also felt that they were not adequately compensated for their cattle by the government. Resistance led to violence against testers and government officials in what became known as the "cow war." The governor had to call in the National Guard in some places to restore order.<sup>319</sup>

By 1932, farmers in Iowa, South Dakota, and other midwestern states took part in a movement to withhold their produce from the markets. These farmers wanted to drive up the crop prices by keeping their produce off the market. Any farmer who chose to sell was subject to social consequences and even violence. As an example of the times, a certain Iowa stockman had to have friends with shotguns guarding the sixty fat steers that he sent to the stockyards. On another occasion, deputies had to escort twenty-two truckloads of livestock to their destination—they were stopped by hundreds of members of the Farm Holiday Association.<sup>320</sup>

Despite the resistance from many quarters of the industry, the fee increase tripled the Meat Board's annual income within a few years. From 1925 to 1931, the Board's yearly income remained around \$68,000. From May 1, 1930, to April 30, 1931, the Board brought in \$68,004.27. Then, the following year, from 1931 to 1932—after the fee had been implemented—the Board's

income jumped to \$128,441.38. The next fiscal year saw an increase of almost \$50,000. Finally, from 1933 to 1934, the Board received \$210,952.10—and this during the worst part of the Depression.<sup>321</sup>

Perhaps commission firms understood the times and knew that every cent mattered to the farmers. Maybe commission firms did not want to add an extra fee to stock raisers that risked serious damage to property to ship their cattle and hogs to the stockyards. Farmers went on strike—refused to sell produce—in other cities in South Dakota and Minnesota. Maybe commission firms understood that the additional charge might result in a strike of the stockyards and packers may have feared it would result in a strike against direct buying.

Large packers and wealthy stockmen viewed the industry in long terms, even during some of the worst years of the depression. This long-term view put them at odds with small farmers and stockmen who essentially could not afford to look beyond their present and dire need for cash. The Meat Board members surprisingly did not account for the depression when trying to convince commission firms and small packers to collect the fee. These commission companies were in direct contact with farmers and maybe understood the farmer's economic problems better than the Meat Board did. Meat Board members were convinced that if commission firms only knew the work of the Meat Board and understood its long-term benefits then they would support it.

Hoover's Farm Board failed in the case of livestock in part because it created more intense competition, rather than cooperation, within the industry. It pitted commission firms and producers against each other in many markets.

Throughout the 1920s, two camps coalesced around the question of how to best solve the agricultural problem. On one side was the Farm Bureau and those who supported more direct government intervention and on the other were Hoover, the packers, and the leading producers

who supported cooperative marketing and viewed the government as a junior partner. The big packers cultivated a close relationship with producers and producers, after being burned by the federal government through the Food Administration, seeing the weakness of the Packers and Stockyards Act, and the lack of support for livestock offered through the McNary-Haugen bill, with trepidation turned to them for leadership. However, producers were not willing to give packers too much control as seen in their refusal to support the Thorne plan. Even though they knew the packers manipulated them, producers at least knew that the packers would always have the interest of the industry at heart. In fact, throughout the 1920s and early 30s, the packers and the Meat Board promoted a shared meat ideology for the livestock industry in an effort to maintain the support of producers, commission firms, and others.

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<sup>253</sup> Kendrick A. Clements, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary, 1918–1928* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Ellis Hawley, ed., *Herbert Hoover as Secretary of Commerce: Studies in New Era Thought and Practice* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1974); Ellis W. Hawley. “Herbert Hoover, the Commerce Secretariat, and the Vision of an ‘Associative State,’ 1921–1928,” *Journal of American History* 61 (June 1974): 116–140.

<sup>254</sup> Joseph F. Bradley, *The Role of Trade Associations and Professional Business Societies in America* (University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1965), 2–5; 46.

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- <sup>255</sup> Thomas E. Wilson, "The Future of the Institute of the American Meat Packers," (pamphlet, 1922 or 1923), Hoover Papers.
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- <sup>257</sup> Paul I. Aldrich, "The Industry at the Crossroads: An Editorial on the Institute Plan," *National Provisioner*, 66 no. 20 (May 20, 1922): 17–8.
- <sup>258</sup> Everett C. Brown to Hoover, March 12, 1922, Secretary of Commerce Files, Box 61 folder "Brown, Everett C., 1921-1928," Hoover Papers.
- <sup>259</sup> George H. Nash, *The Life of Herbert Hoover: Master of Emergencies, 1917-1918* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996).
- <sup>260</sup> Henry C. Wallace, "Address," ANLSA Convention, 1924.
- <sup>261</sup> Herbert Hoover, *The Memoirs of Herbert Hoover: Years of Adventure, 1874–1920* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1951), 109.
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- <sup>264</sup> "Wallace won't Act on Packer Merger," *New York Times*, December 13, 1922.

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- <sup>265</sup> “Packer Merger not in Interest of Producer,” *The Producer*, December 1922, 14; “The Packer Merger,” 16 “Complaint dismissed in Armour Morris case,” *The Producer*, October 1925, 16
- <sup>266</sup> C. Fred Williams, “William M. Jardine and the Development of Republican Farm Policy, 1925–1929,” PhD diss. Norman: Oklahoma University, 1971), 125–6.
- <sup>267</sup> “Packer Merger not in Interest of Producer,” *The Producer*, December 1922, 14; “The Packer Merger,” 16; “Resolution No. 5,” ANLSA Convention, 1923.
- <sup>268</sup> Edward Wentworth, “The New Head of Armour and Co,” *The Producer*, April 1923, 17.
- <sup>269</sup> “The Merger and the Packers,” *The Producer*, April 1923, 14, 16; Edward Wentworth, “The New Head of Armour and Co,” *The Producer*, April 1923, 17; F. Snyder to Hoover, April 2, 1923, Secretary of Commerce Files, Box 452 folder “Packers, General, 1921-1926, undated,” Hoover Papers.
- <sup>270</sup> “Armour-Morris merger,” *The Producer*, March 1923.
- <sup>271</sup> “Resolution No. 8,” ANLSA Convention, 1924, 173–5.
- <sup>272</sup> “Resolution No. 11, 12, 13,” ANLSA Convention, 1925, 110–1.
- <sup>273</sup> “Packer Combination Upheld,” *The Producer*, October 1925, 13.
- <sup>274</sup> “Resolution No. 8,” ANLSA Convention, 1926, 123.
- <sup>275</sup> Anonymous, “Memorandum,” November 23, 1933, Box 1 folder 9, Union Stockyards Records, University of Illinois, Chicago. Hereafter cited as Union Stockyards Records.
- <sup>276</sup> R. Douglas Hurt, *Problems of Plenty: The American Farmer in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, ILL: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 58–60.
- <sup>277</sup> House Committee on Agriculture, *McNary-Haugen Export Bill; Hearings on H. R. 5563*, 68<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1st sess., 1924, serial E, 717.

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 445–47.

<sup>279</sup> Clements, *Imperfect Visionary*, 210; Gary H. Koerselman, “Secretary Hoover and National Farm Policy: Problems of Leadership” *Agricultural History* 51, no. 2 (April 1977), 389.

<sup>280</sup> Hurt, *Problems of Plenty*, 59–60.

<sup>281</sup> Louis D. H. Weld, “Discussion: Does the Farmer Need Help?” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York*, Vol. 11, no. 2, (January 1925), 76–7.

<sup>282</sup> As recounted in Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 137.

<sup>283</sup> Wood, *Kansas Beef Industry*, 228; Schlebecker, *Cattle Raising on the Plains*, 117.

<sup>284</sup> “Senator Kendrick on the Cattle Industry,” *The Producer*, September 1926, 6–7.

<sup>285</sup> “Senator Kendrick on the Cattle Industry,” *The Producer*, September 1926, 6–7.

<sup>286</sup> “Address by President L. C. Brite,” ANLSA Convention, 1929.

<sup>287</sup> ANLSA Convention, 1933, 58.

<sup>288</sup> F. Edson White, “The Maintenance of Prosperity in the Cattle Industry,” ANLSA Convention, 1929.

<sup>289</sup> Max Foran, “Crucial and Contentious: The American Market and the Development of the Western Canadian Beef Cattle Industry to 1948,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 32 no. 3, (2002): 458.

<sup>290</sup> Hurt, *Problems of Plenty*, 19–22, 52–4; Michael Johnson Grant, *Down and Out on the Family Farm: Rural Rehabilitation in the Great Plains, 1929–1945* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 65.

<sup>291</sup> Howard, James R., *Howard and the Farm Bureau*; Choate, *Disputed Ground*, 24.

<sup>292</sup> James H. Shideler, “Herbert Hoover and the Federal Farm Board Project, 1921–1925,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 42, no. 4 (March 1956), 712.



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<sup>293</sup> *Agricultural Marketing Act*, Public Law 10, *U. S. Statutes at Large* 46 (1931): 11.

<sup>294</sup> *Agricultural Marketing Act*, Public Law 10, *U. S. Statutes at Large* 46 (1931): 14.

<sup>295</sup> Untitled list of names and bios, President's Subject Files, Box 148 folder "Farm Matters: Federal Farm Board, Correspondence, June 1933," Hoover Papers.

<sup>296</sup> To the Executive Committee, Box 511 January 28, 1931, folder "Financial Files: Auditors Reports, 1930–1936," ANLSA Records.

<sup>297</sup> ANLSA Convention 1933, 33–7.

<sup>298</sup> F. Edson White, "The Maintenance of Prosperity in the Cattle Industry," ANLSA Convention, 1929, 36; Fred Bixby, "Taking of subscriptions," ANLSA Convention, 1929, 62.

<sup>299</sup> Board of Directors, St. Louis Live Stock Exchange to President Hoover, September 24, 1930, President's Subject Files, Box 146 Folder "Farm Matters: Federal Farm Board Correspondence, September–December 1930," Hoover Papers.

<sup>300</sup> John Adler to Hoover, May 24, 1930, President's Subject Files, Box 146 folder "Farm Matters: Federal Farm Board, Correspondence, June 1930." Hoover Papers.

<sup>301</sup> C. B. Denman to President Hoover, September 27, 1930, President's Subject Files, Box 146 folder "Farm Matters: Federal Farm Board Correspondence, September–December 1930," Hoover Papers; C. B. Denman, "The Federal Farm Board and its Activities," ANLSA Convention, 1931, 100.

<sup>302</sup> "Agricultural Marketing Act" *The Producer*, September 1932, 12–3.

<sup>303</sup> Denman to Hoover, March 14, 1931, President's Subject Files, Box 146 folder "Farm Matters: Federal Farm Board Correspondence, March 1–15, 1931," Hoover Papers.

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<sup>304</sup> “Movement to further Beef interest,” *The Producer*, February 1929; NLSMB Executive Meeting Minutes, December 1929, p. 134, Box 290, National Live Stock and Meat Board Records, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie. Hereafter cited as NLSMB Records.

<sup>305</sup> ANLSA convention 1930, 55.

<sup>306</sup> “Thorne Plan,” Casement Papers.

<sup>307</sup> Special Committee Meeting, July 13, 1933, p. 8–9, Box 290 folder “Minutes: Special Committee, NLSMB,” NLSMB Records.

<sup>308</sup> William Woods, “Progress in the Meat Industry,” ANLSA Convention, 1930, p. 49, 55, 59.

<sup>309</sup> NLSMB Executive Meeting Minutes, December 1929, p. 109–150, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>310</sup> NLSMB Executive Meeting Minutes, December 1929, p. 109–150, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>311</sup> Special Committee Meeting, July 13, 1933, Box 290 folder “Minutes: Special Committee, NLSMB,” NLSMB Records; NLSMB Executive Meeting Minutes, December 1931, p. 96–101, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>312</sup> NLSMB Executive Meeting Minutes, June 1931, p. 205, Box 290, NLSMB Records; Nourse, *Cooperative Marketing*, 145.

<sup>313</sup> Special Committee Meeting, July 13, 1933, p. 8–9, Box 290 folder “Minutes: Special Committee, NLSMB,” NLSMB Records.

<sup>314</sup> NLSMB Executive Meeting Minutes, June 1931, p. 185, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>315</sup> NLSMB Executive Meeting Minutes, June 1931, p. 214, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>316</sup> NLSMB Executive Meeting Minutes, June 1931, p. 223, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>317</sup> NLSMB Executive Meeting Minutes, June 1931, p. 179, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>318</sup> Choate, *Disputed Ground*, 42.

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<sup>319</sup> Choate, *Disputed Ground*, 43.

<sup>320</sup> Choate, *Disputed Ground*, 47–51.

<sup>321</sup> Herrell DeGraff, “Report and Recommendations of the Program and Policy Study Committee to the Directors of the National Live Stock and Meat Board,” January 18, 1962 page 4, Box 16 folder “History of the NLMB, NLMB File,” NLSMB Records.

## **Chapter 5 - Making Meat Myths: Fighting Vegetarianism in the Realms of Science and Publicity**

In 1932, June Koepke, an Elmore, Minnesota high school student won the ninth annual meat story contest that was sponsored by the National Live Stock and Meat Board. Rather than pick one of the NLSMB's suggested topics, such as "why I am not a vegetarian," Koepke chose her own and titled her essay, "Why do we eat meat?" For Koepke, food not only symbolized traits but actually imparted those traits in a biological sense. She wrote that "any food owes its reputation to its content and the use that content has to society." She discussed the use of protein in building muscle, fats in providing energy, and then she explained the importance of iron. Koepke wrote that "the one disease anemia is connected to a great extent with meat and it has been influential in giving it a reputation." She then linked meat eating to American character stating that "America is a condition of the blood and meat is efficient in nourishing blood." She explained the necessity of iron in treating anemia and stated that meat was a great source of iron. The contest flyer only listed by name three places to obtain information—the Meat Board and the Institute of American Meat Packers were two of them. Koepke, probably drawing heavily from these sources in compiling her essay, received a \$150 scholarship and \$150 in cash.<sup>322</sup>

Stockmen and packers approved of her message that synthesized the meat research of the previous decade as well as the symbolism of meat in western civilization. Her essay was chosen as the winner out of more than 10,000 entries. The *Kansas Stockman* reprinted her essay in full, which it had not done with previous winners. Koepke's essay mirrored the Meat Board and IAMP propaganda of the 1920s and early 1930s. The Meat Board and the IAMP funded scientific research on meat and expanded those findings into euthenic myths about meat in their campaign against vegetarianism. These meat myths, ostensibly supported by science, provided a unifying ideology

for producer and packer collaboration and were the fruit of the packer trade association and the cooperative marketing association, the NLSMB.

Meat myths, created by the Meat Board and the meat packers, served as the unifying ideology of collaboration. These myths were the rallying point that, packers hoped, would inspire producers to voluntarily work with them. After all, associationalism required voluntary cooperation, and propaganda was the surest way to motivate people to act. The IAMP and the Meat Board carried on the Food Administration (FA) theme of linking diet to patriotism and morality, by fostering red meat nationalism, which linked meat-eating to a strong nation. Packers did not create meat nationalism but built on a pre-existing theme within the livestock industry and even within western culture. In making meat eating into a patriotic venture, meat packers cast vegetarians as the prime enemy. The meat packers and others within the livestock industry drew on red-blooded realism in their defense of red meat nationalism. The IAMP and the Meat Board funded scientific research on meat's ability to cure anemia and used the third-party technique to fund and promote the healthfulness of a meat diet through the Stefansson experiment. The Meat Board also sanctioned the third-party technique by exploiting one of its employee's dual position as head of the Meat Board nutrition division and her position on the faculty of Rush Medical College. In the early 1930s, the Meat Board launched a successful advertising campaign targeted at medical journals that helped lead to the American Medical Association (AMA) seal of approval for many different facts about meat in 1933.

During WWI, the Food Administration marshaled the nation's food supply to feed Europe, American soldiers, and the home front. In doing so, the Food Administration, to a degree, nationalized the meat industry and every other aspect of food production. The FA and other government bureaus gained the cooperation of the American people through propaganda. The FA

turned food production into a patriotic endeavor. Many stockmen, perhaps because of the FA propaganda, proudly proclaimed their patriotic production. Aside from their frustration with Hoover's imposition of meatless days, stockmen generally understood their task of raising livestock as providing soldiers with strength-giving meat. Articles from livestock journals, for example, explained how beef made fresh recruits into strong soldiers and thus helped win the war.<sup>323</sup>

The Food Administration, as mentioned previously, also accustomed Americans to eating less meat. Herbert Hoover's Food Administration appealed not only to the average American's sense of patriotism but also to his or her sense of self-discipline. Hoover believed that voluntary means of conformity with Food Administration slogans fit the principles of a democratic nation—especially one engaged in a war against German autocracy. He, therefore, had the FA use slogans that carried moral force. For example, one slogan stated “Now is the hour of our testing. Let us make it the hour of our victory—the victory over ourselves.” During the last years of World War I, then, conservation of food and by extension, adherence to FA guidelines, became symbols of self-control and patriotic expression.<sup>324</sup> Thus, for some consumers, less meat in the diet had gained the force of a moral imperative.

After the war, the big packers promoted cooperation within the livestock industry to combat the meatless day propaganda and to maintain a sense of unity of purpose among all facets of the livestock industry. In 1919, the war on the packers was at its height and packers spent millions in advertising and public relations to refurbish their public image. Some of the big packers, if not all, supported associationalism and wanted the entire industry to cooperate for stability. Getting most of the packers to cooperate through a new association, the Institute of American Meat Packers was not too difficult but getting the stockmen to cooperate meant putting

an end to their war on the packers. In attempting to gain the stockmen's voluntary cooperation, packers appealed to profit, but also to a master narrative that linked meat production and meat-eating to nationalism. The IAMP and the Meat Board, in a sense, carried on the Food Administration theme of linking diet to patriotism and morality, though they modified it for their own purposes. Essentially, the master narrative of meat transformed meat consumption into a campaign that was necessary to boost and maintain American supremacy. The enemy in this ideological campaign was primarily vegetarianism.

The IAMP was one of the main promoters of the myth that meat production was a grave national necessity. The packer trade association, the IAMP, created a livestock journal called the *Meat and Live Stock Digest* that was distributed to stockmen. This journal represented packer outreach to stockmen and was a part of their public relations efforts. For this reason, it offers an insight into what type of news the packers thought would maintain the producer's good will. It featured countless articles that developed the theme of meat, nationalism, and anti-vegetarianism. The journal reprinted stories on this theme from various newspapers and livestock journals from across the country. These articles promoted, defended, and explained the principles of what might be called "red meat nationalism." By 1932, the narrative was clear enough that a high school home economics student from Minnesota—as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter—could easily make the connections in an essay.

The IAMP used the myth of red meat nationalism as a way of bringing producers into common cause with packers. The packers tried to unify the different groups of the livestock industry—packers, commission firms, retailers, and especially producers—through the story of meat and its supposed role in nation building. Sociologists have noted this connection between food and nationalism. Similar to the meat packers, other movements have constructed and asserted

a “common food culture” in order to “bring different groups of people (divided by ethnicity, religion, geography, or class) together.” The meat narrative or red meat nationalism was just such a “common food culture.” The packers cast vegetarians and food faddists as the enemies of this national food culture. In this case “the private sector unwittingly act[ed] as a nationalist in maintaining and reinforcing the framework of the nation while pursuing apolitical activities such as profit maximization.” While the packers purposefully linked the meat industry to national greatness, their primary goal was stability in the livestock industry and hence sustained profits.<sup>325</sup>

As meat prices declined steadily and dramatically from 1919 to 1922 more stockmen accepted the idea of collaboration with the packers. The defenders of collaboration, both producers and packers, conceived of meat production as a patriotic duty, recalling the urgings of the Food Administration. Rather than meat making strong soldiers, now the promoters of collaboration essentially claimed that meat eating made strong citizens and strong citizens made a strong country. Therefore, livestock raisers had a patriotic duty to supply the nation with meat. According to the meat narrative, the more meat Americans consumed, the stronger the nation would become. Conversely, vegetarianism would supposedly make the nation weak.

Packers did not create meat nationalism but built on a pre-existing theme within the livestock industry and even within western culture. For example, in the opening address to the 1916 Kansas Livestock Association (KLA) convention, H. J. Waters president of Kansas Agricultural College argued against the Food Administration’s meat rationing based on meat nationalism. He stated that “meat makes brawn, a healthy body and a fertile mind” and claimed that Americans ate more meat than any other people in the world, which “makes a dominant race.” If the government limited meat intake for Americans, he reasoned, then “we are striking at the very thing that makes American people the greatest dominant race in the World.”<sup>326</sup> Similarly, in



1920, in an address to the National Farm Congress at Kansas City, Joseph Mercer, secretary of the KLA, told the crowd that “our people must be encouraged to eat meat in order that we be a strong and virile race.”<sup>327</sup>

Indeed, the idea that meat provided physical strength and virility had deep roots in western civilization. Westerners since the ancient world have identified meat with manliness and power.<sup>328</sup> Building on the influence of Pythagoras, the father of vegetarianism, Plato depicted the ideal city as a vegetarian one because meat eating led to war and decadence.<sup>329</sup> Many westerners in the Victorian Era held the belief that meat was so potent that women should eat it only sparingly and that it should not be fed to young children.<sup>330</sup> Health reformers in the nineteenth century were already promoting the idea that the “consumption of meat . . . by women and children, is needless and unwholesome.”<sup>331</sup> By the early twentieth century, even many medical professionals had adopted the idea that Americans ate too much meat. Thus, when stockmen and packers equated meat with strength, they drew on a long-standing western notion. They also had to counter the idea that too much meat was detrimental to health—especially the health of women and children.

In 1923, building on decades if not centuries of western ideas, R. C. Pollock, general manager of the Meat Board, expounded red meat nationalism in a speech delivered to a combined group of packers and cattlemen. His address offers a good example of how the apostles of collaboration appealed to patriotism to unite producers and packers and other members of the livestock industry. Pollock noted happily the growth of collaboration in that “producers, packers, commission men, butchers, and consumers [were] all working loyally together in this movement for the advancement of their common industry.” He asked for empathy in order to achieve a larger goal, telling the group that “we must understand one another’s problems so that we may build together for the advancement of the nation.” He went on to link meat eating with progress, calling

it “one of the striking facts of world history” that “all great forward-moving nations have been eaters of meat.” Meat, according to Pollock, provided physical strength as well as intangible virtues. Pollock said that “it takes meat to provide the bone and sinew, the courage and brain power that make a people great.”<sup>332</sup> Throughout the 1920s the Institute of American Meat Packers and other apostles of cooperation within the industry promoted red meat nationalism in an effort to unify the livestock industry.

In addition to their appeal to patriotism, the promoters of collaboration also created an enemy. Stockmen and packers identified many groups among the anti-meat forces who put forth what they referred to as “insidious propaganda.” In the early 1920s, they blamed meatless days during the war, fad diets, quack snake oil peddlers as well as real doctors, urban consumers, and one stockman even blamed a “New York college professor” for the sharp decrease in meat consumption.<sup>333</sup> More than all of these forces, however, the stockmen blamed the so-called vegetarian “cult.” Vegetarianism grew in popularity during the Progressive Era due to advice from the medical field and from popular journals as well as to wider availability of meat substitutes.<sup>334</sup> Stockmen and packers could draw on statistical evidence to support their fear that vegetarianism was sweeping the nation. For instance, a 1930 *New York Times* article reported that American consumption of fruits and vegetables more than doubled during the 1920s.<sup>335</sup>

The meat industry and vegetarians battled it out in the realm of advertising. Leading the vegetarian charge against meat was John Harvey Kellogg of Battle Creek, Michigan, who some historians referred to as the “the most formidable threat to the meat industry in the early decades of the twentieth century.”<sup>336</sup> A Shredded Wheat ad from 1909 provides a hint of Kellogg’s clever anti-meat propaganda. Its humorous message read, “many persons imagine they can get ‘strong as an ox’ by eating beef. The ox gets his strength from eating grass and cereals. He doesn’t eat meat.

He is a strict vegetarian. Pound for pound there is more muscle-making, brain-building material in Shredded Wheat Biscuit than in beef, bacon, or eggs.”<sup>337</sup> Kellogg often criticized meat when promoting his cereals.

In a later ad, John Harvey Kellogg cleverly lampooned a contemporary meat ad. A sentence at the top of the full-page ad read “the Chicago packers get out a poster, read it then turn it and read the other side.” Below this sentence was the actual meat packer’s ad featuring a roast with the title “Meat is wholesome, for health and vigor eat well-balanced meals.” Turning to the other side of the ad, the reader was confronted with the arresting title “What the bacteriologist finds in meats: millions of colon germs.” The ad then explained the results of a Kellogg study of the “number of bacteria per gram” found in “apparently fresh” meat purchased at seven different locations. Kellogg noted in the ad that the bacteria found on the meat was the same as was found in manure and was the result of the slaughtering process.<sup>338</sup>

In 1923, within a year of the creation of the National Live Stock and Meat Board, its general manager confronted Kellogg on his ads. R. C. Pollock wrote to John Harvey Kellogg asking him if he was “responsible for the distribution of this poster.” Kellogg responded in the affirmative but explained that he “had no animosity against the packers” and actually counted many “prominent” people within the packing industry as his “friends.” He wrote that he was “opposed to meat eating on principle” and that the “‘Eat more Meat’ campaign is a movement likely to do harm rather than good.” Lastly, he stated that he created the anti-meat poster out of a sense of “duty” to give the public correct information. However, because he held no enmity toward the packers individually he promised to remove the reference to the packers on the poster.<sup>339</sup>

The Meat Board and the big packers were incensed at the ad. C. Robert Moulton, director of the bureau of nutrition for the Institute of American Meat Packers fumed at the “false and

misleading” facts printed on Kellogg’s poster and recommended that Dr. John R. Mohler, chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry of the USDA, testify on the falsity of Kellogg’s claims before the Federal Trade Commission. However, Bureau of Animal Industry Chief Mohler, who was even friendly to the packing industry, wrote to Pollock explaining that Kellogg’s statements were probably accurate. For one thing, there were germs on meat that were found in the colon, but these were harmless. Kellogg was technically correct in his statements, but he implied that all meat was contaminated with harmful germs. Pollock then lamented that “it appears that we have absolutely no case against Mr. Kellogg.”<sup>340</sup>

Though unable to disprove that “colon germs” inhabited the surface of processed meat, the Meat Board and the packers were undaunted. In promoting meat, the livestock industry associated meat eating with certain characteristics. A number of scholars have pointed out that when vegetarianism becomes popular in a meat-eating society, it prompts that society to defend meat, which in turn reveals the dominant meat-eating ideology. This is because vegetarianism almost never occurs as merely a diet, but “comes in conjunction with a complex of other beliefs.”<sup>341</sup> The big packers and others in the livestock industry sought to demonstrate that meat made stronger bodies than grains, fruits, and vegetables. As hinted at in the Kellogg and meat ads mentioned previously, one of the major points of contention between vegetarians and meat eaters was over the ability of their food to provide physical strength. Vegetarians and meat eaters both claimed that their foods were essential for creating strong bodies. People in the meat industry linked strong bodies to a strong nation.

One example among many was an article from the meat packer journal, the *Meat and Live Stock Digest* that was called “says meat eaters are men who have ruled the world.” The article explained how “meat and leadership have always gone together.” The author explained how a high

meat diet enabled the English as well as the Vikings to dominate the world and how “in many ways, [the northern Europeans] taste has always been for blood.” The article explained further that “the Berserker of the Northland is a typical red-blooded man. As a fighting man the world has not known his superior.” The author also added that “vegetarianism is a fad which has never found any considerable percentage of a population of a red-blooded, dominant race addicted to it.”<sup>342</sup>

Others in the livestock industry made the link between meat eating and nationalism. In 1928, the state veterinarian of Montana published an article called “Beef praised for qualities that make a healthy race” in the Helena, Montana, *Record Herald* and reprinted in the *Meat and Live Stock Digest*. The author boiled down the idea of beef nationalism to a syllogism. He wrote “beef is associated with health. Beef is a producer of energy. Energy is a producer of great men . . . What we need is more beef eaters.”<sup>343</sup> Prominent breeder and ANLSA executive member Dan Casement echoed these sentiments in an address to the IAMP on the topic of the beef producer’s problems. He wrote that “the most important contribution made by the livestock business is to our national character in the type of men developed by it.” Casement was hopeful that Americans would eat as much meat as they could afford, because “we as a nation, naturally crave meat in our diet.”<sup>344</sup>

Researchers employed by livestock industry organizations demonstrated meat’s ability to build blood and they, as well as members of the Kansas Livestock Association and the livestock industry in general, made the leap from meat’s role in regenerating human blood to building a strong nation. Stockmen’s conception of a strong nation included a constellation of other ideas such as manliness, Anglo-Saxon superiority, and rural values. Many contemporaries associated these same ideas with the myth of the American frontier. Richard Slotkin called this worldview “red blooded realism.”<sup>345</sup> It is no surprise that stockmen and packers also used the term “red-

blooded” to encapsulate these concepts, but in contrast to Slotkin’s findings, the livestock industry ascribed the characteristics of red-bloodedness to meat eating.

The Meat Board as well as the Institute of American Meat Packers funded and promoted research that demonstrated the value of meat, and especially red meat, in the diet. Industry leaders thought red meat played an important role because they viewed it as the “flagship” meat of the industry. The Meat Board constitution explained that “all species groups have worked together in recognition of the basic fact that any one kind of meat cannot fully succeed in the market if red meat, in general, is under a cloud of adverse public attitude.”<sup>346</sup>

Stockmen and packers applied the term red-blooded to those men who best exemplified a type of frontier manliness. Rancher and former soldier, Will C. Barnes described Theodore Roosevelt as “the embodiment of virile, red-blooded American manhood.”<sup>347</sup> In an article in praise of one of Montana’s pioneer stockmen, an author described the West with its great “outdoors,” “Indians,” “gold,” and “wild game,” among some of the “things that attract any red-blooded American.” The author then explained that “the northwest bred a race of he-men with kind hearts. It weeded out the weaklings and misfits. . . . planted the institutions and ideals of Anglo-Saxon civilization in the wake of the Indians.”<sup>348</sup> Finally, when renowned KLA breeder Dan Casement made a bid for the Republican nomination for Congress in the Kansas Fifth District his “farmer and livestock friends” placed an ad in a local paper that touted the “two-fisted” Casement as “one big bristling package of red-blooded humanity,” among other things. A number of cattlemen in state and out of state sent him letters of encouragement and support.<sup>349</sup> The focus on red-blooded masculinity may have in part been a response to the “effeminate masculinity” associated with the urban elite.<sup>350</sup>

Both packers and producers tapped into the contemporary rampant fears of “race suicide” by appealing to Anglo-Saxon superiority. However, with increased meat consumption as their ultimate aim, the livestock industry emphasized meat eating as a means of assimilation into American culture. In the early 1920s, many Americans feared that supposedly “‘mongrel’ races” would weaken national character, which prompted Congress to draft a bill that would preserve, as one member put it, the “good blood” of Americans.<sup>351</sup> Evidence of heightened American nativism can be seen in the government raids on Russian immigrants during the First Red Scare, which violated immigrant’s civil liberties. Not all Americans opposed immigrants, though. Noted legal scholars defended their rights and Progressive reformers like Jane Addams of Chicago even provided humanitarian aid.<sup>352</sup> Congress, however, did not choose humanitarian assistance and favored a law to restrict immigration. One congressman defended the law in eugenic terms as “the necessity for purifying and keeping pure the blood of America.”<sup>353</sup> In 1924, nativist sentiment was encapsulated in the extremely exclusionary Immigration Act. Americans in general wanted to restrict immigration to British or Teutonic people, but the livestock industry propaganda at least held the possibility that immigrants—regardless of origin—might become red-blooded Americans through increased meat consumption.

Livestock industry propaganda connected a vegetarian diet to weak national character. For example, in 1920, the author of an article in the *Kansas Stockman* proclaimed that “this campaign against the use of meat is a menace to the health of our race and should be condemned by all thinking people. Meat is the all-important food for red blooded Americans.” He then quoted Hereford breeder and KLA president in 1924, W. H. Shroyer, who stated that if “any wish to grow and look like Chinamen, they should live on rice and noodles.” Similarly, the Institute of American Meat Packers explained in its newspaper the weakness of vegetarians by stating, “look at the three

hundred million Asiatics in India, that live on vegetables . . . and look at the handful of Englishmen thousands of miles away that keep the three hundred million vegetarians under their thumb.”<sup>354</sup> Another article contrasted the “beef eater” with the “vegetarian” who was “racially a mild-mannered man” as exemplified by the Hindus, according to the author. The author concluded by stating that “vegetarianism is a fad which has never found any considerable percentage of a population of a red-blooded, dominant race addicted to it.”<sup>355</sup>

Even though livestock industry propaganda touted the superiority of northern European races it also linked their superiority to the amount of meat that they ate. One example from the packer journal, the *Meat and Live Stock Digest* was entitled, “says meat eaters are men who have ruled the world.” The author explained how “meat and leadership have always gone together” and pointed out how the Vikings and the English owed their world dominance to their beef eating habits. He explained how “in many ways, his taste has always been for blood.”<sup>356</sup>

A later article, from 1926, in the *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, suggested that meat-eating was a vehicle for the Americanization of immigrants. The article was called “says years of trial prove value of meat in the diet.” The author condemned vegetarianism and extolled the virtues of meat. In the opening paragraph the author wrote, “Americans are acknowledged to be a meat-eating race, but it is also observed on every side that the peoples of other countries which are not classed as big meat consumers soon acquire the habit after coming here, and once the practice is in use, it is seldom abandoned. Judging from the relative position of Americans with regard to progress, including inventions, business, building development, land development, accumulation of wealth, and even in the arts, all of which demand vigor, the meat that has been eaten has not been a disadvantage.”<sup>357</sup> This author linked meat eating not just to Americanization, but also to what he saw as America’s greatness.



The journal also followed the efforts to increase meat eating in Japan to test meat's ability to strengthen a nation. The author of one article explained how "Japan is dissatisfied with the short stature of its men and proposes to add inches to the height of Japanese by converting them into a meat-eating race."<sup>358</sup> In 1929 the *Live Stock and Meat Digest* ran an article called "meat stimulates growth" in which they claimed that "the influence of nourishment upon the development of race characteristics has been shown by certain experiments of Japanese scientists in Tokyo." Indeed, since the late 1800s, Japanese government officials and intellectuals had been promoting meat eating in the hope that it would increase height and strength.<sup>359</sup> According to the livestock journal, Japanese scientists were trying "to determine whether the slight stature of the Japanese depends on the rice diet . . . ."<sup>360</sup> The author explained how Japanese children's usual rice dishes were supplemented with foods typically eaten by countries with taller people. The association was clear: the packer newspaper featured stories that made Italians and Japanese out to be weak but claimed that they could become strong through eating meat.

The IAMP built on the pseudo-science of eugenics in its connection between diet and "red-bloodedness." Closely related to eugenics, eugenics was the science of race betterment through environment, especially through diet. Both eugenics and eugenics taught that diet could change biological races. They were in part inspired by the research on anemia that was funded by the IAMP.

While simultaneously crafting meat mythology, the members of the Meat Board and the IAMP sought to shore up their claims about meat-eating with hard evidence. Therefore, beginning in 1922, the NLSMB as well as the IAMP both funded scientific research that would support red meat nationalism. The Meat Board established fellowships for the study of meat at the University of Rochester and Columbia University, the IAMP employed its own scientists, and both

organizations collected research from around the country that demonstrated the healthfulness of meat.<sup>361</sup> One of their primary research interests was the role of meat in blood regeneration for curing anemia. The interest in curing anemia recalled all of the major themes of red meat nationalism.

Thomas E. Wilson was interested in funding scientific research into meat to boost its reputation. Wilson was the chairman of the committee on research and nutrition for the Meat Board and viewed its scientific research as a means of establishing uncontestable facts about meat. These facts, Wilson assured his fellow board members, would allow for their “emissaries” to “go out and fight the battle for meat.”<sup>362</sup> It is not surprising then that both of the associations that Wilson created—the IAMP and the NLSMB—promoted scientific research into meat. Perhaps his greatest triumph in the 1920s was the Meat Board and IAMP’s funding of George H. Whipple’s studies on meat’s role in curing anemia, which is when the red blood cells cannot carry sufficient oxygen, causing fatigue in humans and animals. Some types of anemia were fatal so this breakthrough actually saved lives—if they could stand eating liver on a regular basis.<sup>363</sup>

George Whipple was a promising physician in the late nineteen teens. Whipple graduated from Johns Hopkins Medical School and became interested in the regeneration of red blood cells while conducting other research. He and fellow researchers also studied the effect of diet on the regeneration of red blood cells. In 1921, Whipple accepted an offer to serve as dean at the newly created University of Rochester School of Medicine in New York where he and his research partner, Frieda Robscheit-Robbins arrived later in the next year. They studied blood regeneration in Robscheit-Robbins’s special strain of Dalmatian-English Bulldogs. In their 1925 landmark paper on their findings, they credited the National Live Stock and Meat Board Fellowship and the National Research Council for funding their research. The National Research Council was not

acting independently, it actually helped administer the NLSMB fellowships. They also cited “with pleasure” the “friendly advice and assistance of Dr. E. B. Forbes and Dr. C. Robert Moulton.” Both of these doctors worked for the nutrition department of the Institute of American Meat Packers.<sup>364</sup>

The team of Whipple and Robscheit-Robbins found that iron was key in blood regeneration and that beef liver was the best food for the body to get this mineral. Prior to their findings, scientists had been puzzled by what seemed to be a clear logical connection. Up to that point, scientists knew that certain illnesses were caused by a lack of red blood cells and that red blood cells contained iron. Assuming that these illnesses were caused by a lack of iron, scientists treated the sufferers by giving them iron supplements, but the patients failed to improve.<sup>365</sup> Then came Whipple and Robscheit-Robbins whose research demonstrated that the body could modify at will hemoglobin—which carries iron in the red blood cells—regeneration through “diet control.”<sup>366</sup> The duo continued to study anemia and diet—using meat supplied by a local packing company—throughout the 1920s and 1930s, eventually publishing many papers on “Blood Regeneration in Severe Anemia.”<sup>367</sup> One of their major findings was that liver fed to anemic dogs was the best method of promoting the “regeneration of hemoglobin.” This finding caught the attention of another team of scientists who were looking for a cure for “pernicious anemia” in humans and using Whipple’s findings, they “were able to demonstrate conclusively that a diet containing large amounts of raw or cooked beef liver produced phenomenal sustained remissions of pernicious anemia.” Other meats and by-products were also found to be high in iron and therefore helpful in curing anemia. Their combined research and findings were so important that Whipple and the other two male scientists won the Nobel Prize in Medicine or Physiology in 1934.<sup>368</sup> Curiously, even though Frieda Robscheit-Robbins was listed as a co-author in many of Whipple’s publications, she

was not recognized by the Nobel Prize committee. Whipple, for his part, split his Nobel Prize money with her.<sup>369</sup>

These findings were exactly the sort of incontrovertible facts that big packer and Meat Board patriarch Thomas Wilson had hoped for. Now, vegetarians like Kellogg could not deny meat's superior ability to cure anemia. This research also led to free publicity as many newspapers across the country celebrated these research findings on liver and meats. Livestock journals like *Kansas Stockman*, the *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, and the *Breeder's Gazette*, as well as home economics journals, touted the findings as well. The IAMP was particularly active in disseminating these findings through the sponsorship of lectures and publications by its own scientists.<sup>370</sup> For example, Dr. C. Robert Moulton, of the nutrition department of the IAMP, stated that the vegetarian diet was only made adequate by the addition of eggs and milk, but that "liver and kidney are much more valuable for building good red blood than are milk or eggs."<sup>371</sup> As hoped for, by 1929, Whipple's research, the meat industry's dispersion of his findings, and the medical establishment's promotion of liver had helped increase beef liver sales.<sup>372</sup> In 1929, Thomas Wilson proclaimed with satisfaction to fellow Meat Board members that because of the nutrition research, "our people . . . are talking with more confidence, are feeling more sure." He gladly related that "they are not stumped by anybody in backing up their arguments and their position."<sup>373</sup>

The beef industry added pseudo-science to the scientific findings by claiming that meat's ability to cure anemia was tangible evidence of meats symbolic value as a giver of strength. Being anemic was defined in a 1950s Webster's dictionary as "lacking vigor . . . weak . . . bloodless."<sup>374</sup> The body's red blood cells cannot carry sufficient oxygen, which causes fatigue, or as stockmen and packers put it, weakness. So if meat eating helped cure anemia, then the livestock industry would have scientific proof that meat eating made people strong. One anemia test, in particular,

highlighted the connection between anemic weakness and non-Americans. In 1933 the Meat Board's nutrition department, headed by Anna Boller, in cooperation with a local Chicago school district and Northwestern University conducted tests on fifty Italian children who were probably recent immigrants. Tests at Northwestern showed that "better than sixty percent of these children [were] anemic." So, for three and a half months, researchers had twenty-five of the kids eat their typical diet and gave the other twenty-five "all the meat they [could] eat once a day, at noon," which was administered by the school. Researchers kept track of how much meat the children ate at home, too. The board believed that increased meat consumption would greatly boost the children's "hemoglobin count."<sup>375</sup> Because beef promoters linked blood to a strong nation and race it was fitting that the Meat Board singled out recent Italian immigrant children as subjects for its anemia tests. It is as if the Meat Board members suggested that meat-eating was a means of assimilation into American culture.

In December 1933, Boller reported her findings to the Meat Board. Boller explained that the children with anemia in the group that received meat at lunchtime and had meat at home "showed the greatest improvement." After eating extra meat at school, this group of children showed an increase in their red blood cell count as well as in their hemoglobin. Boller noted that she chose the most anemic children to receive the extra meat in her study. Those children who did not receive the extra meat became more anemic. Satisfied with the results, she told the board that it was "ready for publication in scientific form" and that the publicity department could also make a "popular story" out of it.<sup>376</sup>

Although seeming to originate from independent institutions, it was largely the packers who funded some of the major meat research of the 1920s. They directly funded Whipple's research on anemia but indirectly funded the Stefansson study on an all meat diet through the

Russell Sage Institute. In having their own scientists present research and in funding investigations at universities, the IAMP practiced what historian of public relations Scott Cutlip referred to as the third-party technique—delivering propaganda to the public through a seemingly unconnected organization.<sup>377</sup> The IAMP fostered positive research on meat and made the research seem as if it originated outside of the packing industry. The Meat Board also sanctioned the third-party technique by exploiting Anna Boller's dual position as head of the Meat Board nutrition division and her position on the faculty of Rush Medical College. Anna Boller used her position at Rush to conduct Meat Board research, to solicit information, and to promote Meat Board propaganda.

Another area of conflict between vegetarians and the meat industry revolved around the proper amount of meat-derived protein in the human diet. Scientifically produced knowledge about foods was extremely valuable. In the meat industry's campaign against vegetarianism, scientifically sound facts served as weapons of mass destruction. The meat industry and other food companies in the 1920s sought outside justification for their claims, the prize jewel being the American Medical Association "seal of approval." Winning AMA approval was an uphill battle because, according to most people in the livestock industry, the medical establishment was averse to meat eating.

The meat packers indirectly funded the benefits of an all meat diet through a spokesman of sorts, the famous Arctic explorer Vilhjalmur Stefansson. This explorer had spent a combined eleven years in Arctic Canada living among the Inuit. During that time, he ate the same fish and meat-heavy diet as the Indians. By 1924, he had logged 3,000 days of a "one hundred percent meat diet" without any increase in rheumatism or high blood pressure.<sup>378</sup> According to IAMP President William Whitfield Woods, many people at the time believed that too much meat would negatively affect one's health. After Stefansson lived on meat alone in the Arctic for so long, Woods stated

that the public was still skeptical, believing that the all meat diet only worked in the Arctic but would not work in “temperate climates.” Woods told an ANLSA convention that the IAMP “made a grant of \$25,000 to the Russell Sage Institute to conduct an experiment, having Dr. Stefansson and his aid eat nothing but meat for a year.”<sup>379</sup>

The Russell Sage Institute of Pathology conducted the meat packer sponsored research on Stefansson and fellow explorer Karsten Anderson to determine the effect of an all meat diet on health. Stefansson proved to be a great promoter of meat. He said that when he started this experiment of an all meat diet he felt “lackadaisical” but after a short time of eating meat he felt like “jumping out of bed and getting right to work.” He attributed this to his “diet.” Recalling his days with the Inuit, he noted that the Eskimo “who subsist solely on meat, are a cheerful race, optimistic under the most adverse conditions.” Stefansson also addressed his critics stating that “the skeptical vegetarians told me that I could not live on the meat diet in New York’s temperate climate without harmful results. I wanted to show them that they were wrong.” The director of the Russell Sage Institute said that they mostly ate “steak, roast beef, and tongue.” Dr. Clarence Lieb supervised the tests.<sup>380</sup>

In disseminating the Stefansson findings, the IAMP did not always identify its role in funding the research. Instead, it often presented the research as if it was conducted independently of the packers. Even in its own publication, the IAMP did not always advertise its role in funding the research. Popular articles on the experiment did not disclose IAMP funding either. In July 1929, Dr. Clarence Lieb, who supervised the tests, published his findings in the official journal of the American Medical Association, under the title, “The Effects on Human Beings of a Twelve Month’s exclusive Meat Diet based on intensive Clinical and Laboratory Studies on two Arctic Explorers living under average conditions in a New York Climate.” With his study, he sought to

disprove what he identified as the “traditional belief that a high protein intake leads to high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis or nephritis.” To his credit, he noted that some contributions came from the IAMP.<sup>381</sup>

Defending the vegetarian belief that lots of meat in the diet was harmful, Kellogg funded studies at universities as well. The breakfast cereal mogul began funding research at the University of Michigan to show that too much meat caused nephritis or inflammation of the kidneys. According to the Meat Board, other scientists were making similar claims and some dietitians were swayed by this research. In 1930, Dr. Robert Moulton of the IAMP addressed the Meat Board to get it to fund research controverting the connection between excessive meat and nephritis.<sup>382</sup> In 1930 and 1931, Moulton and other doctors even carried on a lively debate in the editorials of the AMA journal.<sup>383</sup> Recent studies have tended to confirm, in general, Kellogg’s claim that high protein intake, especially in the form of red meat, is not only harmful to patients with chronic kidney disease but even for all people. Meat intake has been linked to cancer and other chronic diseases.<sup>384</sup> Controversy remains, however, as other scholars have pointed to the benefits of meat. Historian Roger Horowitz described the protein and the corresponding amino acids necessary for the body to use the protein that is available in meat as “meat’s greatest contribution to the human diet.”<sup>385</sup>

The Meat Board endorsed the third-party technique through its use of Anna Boller, the head of its nutrition division. The board hired Boller at an annual salary of \$3,500, which was \$500 less than what the board had expected to pay. In 1933 she also worked part-time at the prestigious Rush Medical College in Chicago. She was listed as part of the faculty and was “in charge of their clinic . . . and their dispensary.” Perhaps feeling guilty that she was splitting her time in this way



she approached general manager of the Meat Board R. C. Pollock and offered to quit her position at Rush. Pollock told her he would consult the board about it.<sup>386</sup>

When Pollock put the question of Boller working at Rush before the board he was careful to point out the benefit of her position there. He told the board members of a recent news story in which Boller was quoted as defending meat, but the reporter affiliated her with Rush Medical College and did not mention her connection with the Meat Board. Pollock then asked somewhat rhetorically, if the “prestige [of Rush] was worth anything.” All of the members agreed that the prestige was worth a great deal. Pollock excitedly pointed out that her faculty position at Rush “gives her access to every blamed thing . . . it gives her access to every medical institution.” Boller even used her Rush affiliation when soliciting information for the Meat Board from universities and dietitians. Pollock thought that Boller gained greater access to information because “she is not writing from the National Live Stock and Meat Board, she is writing from Rush Medical College.”<sup>387</sup>

An example of the benefit of Boller’s dual position is clearly demonstrated in a study that she initiated on dieting. Boller wanted to conduct a study in connection with Rush Medical College on the “reducing diet,” showing that dieters could eat as much meat as they wanted while maintaining health and still lose weight. In the 1920s, many men and women who wanted to “reduce” their weight would eat more leafy greens in the belief that they were “essential” for losing weight. Even Dr. F. G. Robb of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics thought that the “great and sudden increase in the consumption of vegetables and fruits” was due in part to “a desire to achieve a more slender figure.”<sup>388</sup> Boller wanted to counter the notion that meat in a reducing diet would have an ill effect on a dieter. She elicited the interest of her employer Rush Medical College, which was at that time associated with Chicago University, in her experiment of studying four to six

people who were on reducing diets that included meat for one week out of each month. The patients—all of them morbidly obese and most of them female—stayed in the hospital for seven to ten days out of each month and underwent tests to measure the effect of the reducing diet with meat on the kidneys and other organs.<sup>389</sup> Meat Board General Manager R. C. Pollock joked with fellow Meat Board members that “we can tell the world—Chicago University can tell the world” that if you want to reduce then you can still have all the meat you want.<sup>390</sup> Pollock clearly had no qualms about astroturfing—hiding the sponsorship of one group to make it appear that the information originated from the grassroots.

Dr. Leo K. Campbell of Rush Medical College carried out the tests. In December 1933, Campbell presented his findings to the Meat Board and thanked it for the grant that enabled him to conduct this research. He explained that after five months of this high protein diet his five patients lost between forty and sixty pounds and showed no signs of kidney damage.<sup>391</sup> Thomas Wilson was pleased with the results, stating that “I think we are building on a sound foundation, building up the material that we need to refute the statements that we have to contend with from day to day in our business.”<sup>392</sup>

As the Meat Board had hoped for, Rush Medical College ended up telling the world that meat in the reducing diet was healthy. Dr. Campbell’s published research on meat in the reducing diet in the *Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine* only cited Rush Medical College of Chicago University and made no mention of the Meat Board or its grant to Campbell. His publication was based on an expanded study of twenty-seven individuals, with similar findings as the smaller study that he reported to the Meat Board. It is not clear whether he received a Meat Board grant for this expanded study, but nonetheless, the idea for the experiment still came from the Meat Board.<sup>393</sup> Campbell’s research was featured in *Good Housekeeping* in an article called

“Eat Meat and keep Slim” by one of its staff members, Dr. Walter H. Eddy. He stated that “during the past year I have had many inquiries about the high meat reducing diet worked out by Dr. Leo K. Campbell of Rush Medical College in Chicago.” He explained the principles of the diet, but never mentioned the Meat Board’s role in creating it. He did, however, use Meat Board charts to show general information about dieting and credited the Meat Board with making them.<sup>394</sup>

The IAMP and the Meat Board sought to use another influential third party, the American Medical Association to promote their claims about meat. Founded in 1847, the AMA was a well-respected professional association of doctors and others in the field of medicine. Many in the medical field had preached against eating too much meat, which prompted Armour official Edward Wentworth to decry “the propaganda [that] has come from these doctors for twenty years or more that meat is harmful.” The Meat Board, of which he was a member, wanted the AMA to endorse meat eating and began a campaign to, as Wentworth put it, “convert these doctors.”<sup>395</sup>

In 1931, the avenue for conversion was opened when the AMA launched a committee on foods whose purpose was to evaluate the nutritional claims of food advertisements. This committee operated along familiar associational lines, seeking the “voluntary cooperation” of food processors to create “wholesome” and “nutritional” food “for the welfare of the public and the entire food industry.”<sup>396</sup> The committee on foods hoped to institute “self-control” in the food industry by giving processors the right to display the AMA “Seal of Acceptance on the label and in advertising.” In order to obtain this right, food companies claims about health and nutrition had to be “scientifically verified.” If the food processor failed to “rigorously maintain” the standards that the committee on foods endorsed, then the AMA could revoke their approval and the company would lose the right to display the AMA seal of acceptance.<sup>397</sup>

The Meat Board began a propaganda campaign to win the approval of the medical field by targeting the AMA. The nutrition division of the Meat Board under the supervision of Anna Boller created charts that showed all of the nutritional benefits of meat. Morris Fishbein, who was one of the original members of the AMA committee on foods, was reportedly so impressed with the charts that he asked Boller if he could have them to “reproduce in [his] book.”<sup>398</sup> Beginning around June 1933, the Meat Board sponsored ads in the AMA journal as well as dietitian and hospital journals showing the healthfulness of meat. However, chairman of the Meat Board and rancher, Charles Carey was quick to point out that they “are not advertising meat,” but are trying to educate the medical field. Wentworth added that the Meat Board “might call it an aggressive move on our part to get our story across to the people doing us damage.”<sup>399</sup> In December 1933, Anna Boller announced to the Meat Board that the “food value chart” that she created “has been submitted and has been accepted.”<sup>400</sup> Boller’s campaign to win AMA approval ended with success.

The AMA seal assured the unassailability of many claims by the meat industry. The IAMP listed some of the accepted statements about meat in its *Meat and Live Stock Digest*. Many of these statements countered the vegetarian claims of anti-meat crusaders like John Harvey Kellogg, for instance, that “children need meat,” “meat helps assure adequate diet,” “meat is healthful,” and especially that “man needs meat.” The AMA also endorsed Whipple and Robscheit-Robbins’ research that “meat builds blood.” Perhaps in connection to the Stefansson study, the AMA endorsed the fact that meat “fits us better to resist the wintry blasts of sub zero weather.”<sup>401</sup> These broad and ill-defined claims now carried the weight of scientific fact.

A decade of propaganda and research paid off for meat packers and the livestock industry with AMA approval of many of its claims. It was also not long after AMA approval that meat sales, especially beef, began a steady increase that lasted decades. The big meat packers and the

Meat Board laid the foundation for future meat sales by funding scientific research on meat and building on western notions of meat eating by promoting red meat nationalism. June Koepke, winner of the meat story contest, may have remained a believer in red meat nationalism into her adult life—becoming one of the many consumers who helped boost beef sales in the post-World War II decades.

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<sup>322</sup> “Why do we Eat Meat?” *Kansas Stockman*, June 15, 1932; Flyer for National Meat Story Contest, Box 289, folder “National Meat Story Contest, 9<sup>th</sup>, 1932,” NLSMB Records.

<sup>323</sup> Helen Zoe Veit, *Modern Food, Moral Food: Self-Control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in the Early Twentieth Century*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

<sup>324</sup> Veit, *Modern Food*, 1, 5.

<sup>325</sup> Atsuko Ichijo, Ronald Ranta, *Food, National Identity and Nationalism: From Everyday to Global Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 11.

<sup>326</sup> Wood, *Kansas Beef Industry*, 172.

<sup>327</sup> Joseph Mercer, “Problems of the Livestock Industry: Address delivered before the National Farm Congress at Kansas City, December 9, 1920,” Personal Correspondence of Commissioner Joseph H. Mercer, Kansas State Archives, Topeka, Kansas.

<sup>328</sup> Colin Spencer, *The Heretic’s Feast: A History of Vegetarianism* (London: Fourth Estate, 1994), 30.

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- <sup>329</sup> Francesco Buscemi, *From Body Fuel to Universal Poison: Cultural History of Meat from 1900 to the Present* (Gewerbestrasse, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 10.
- <sup>330</sup> Julia Twigg, “Vegetarianism and the Meaning of Meat,” in *The Sociology of Food and Eating: Essays on the Sociological Significance of Food*, ed. Anne Murcott (Croft, England: Gower Publishing, 1983).
- <sup>331</sup> From *The Health Reformer* quoted in Karen Iacobb and Michael Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America: A History* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 111.
- <sup>332</sup> “Meat for Health Week,” *Kansas Stockman*, June 1, 1923.
- <sup>333</sup> “More Insidious Propaganda,” *Kansas Stockman*, May 1, 1920.
- <sup>334</sup> Karen Iacobb and Michael Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America: A History* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 130–1.
- <sup>335</sup> “Nation shifts Diet to improve Health,” *New York Times*, May 9, 1930.
- <sup>336</sup> Karen Iacobb and Michael Iacobbo, *Vegetarian America: A History* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2004), 151.
- <sup>337</sup> Ad for Shredded Wheat, (*Washington DC*) *Evening Star*, August 8, 1909.
- <sup>338</sup> Kellogg Ad, no date, Box 445 folder “R. C. Pollock—Correspondence with and regarding John Harvey Kellogg and his anti-meat poster, 1923–1824,” NLSMB Records.
- <sup>339</sup> R. C. Pollock to John Harvey Kellogg, July 16, 1923 Box 445 folder “R. C. Pollock—Correspondence with and regarding John Harvey Kellogg and his anti-meat poster, 1923–1824,” NLSMB Records; Kellogg to Pollock, July 24, 1923, Box 445 folder “R. C. Pollock—Correspondence with and regarding John Harvey Kellogg and his anti-meat poster, 1923–1824,” NLSMB Records.

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<sup>340</sup> Moulton to Pollock September 5, 1924; Mohler to Pollock, September 15, 1924; Pollock to Mohler, September 18, 1924, Box 445 folder “R. C. Pollock—Correspondence with and regarding John Harvey Kellogg and his anti-meat poster, 1923–1924,” NLSMB Records.

<sup>341</sup> Julia Twigg, “Vegetarianism and the Meaning of Meat,” in *The Sociology of Food and Eating: Essays on the Sociological Significance of Food*, ed. Anne Murcott (Croft, England: Gower Publishing, 1983), 20.

<sup>342</sup> “Says Meat Eaters are Men who have Ruled the World,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, December 1923.

<sup>343</sup> “Beef praised for Qualities that make a Healthy Race,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, June 1928.

<sup>344</sup> Dan Casement “Present trend in the Livestock Industry” Oct 21, 1929, Box 24 Folder 12, Dan D. Casement Papers, Richard L. D. and Marjorie J. Morse Department of Special Collections, Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. Hereafter cited as “Casement Papers.”

<sup>345</sup> Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 157. Slotkin applied this name specifically to a group of fiction writers.

<sup>346</sup> Herrell DeGraff, “Report and Recommendations of the Program and Policy Study Committee to the Directors of National Livestock and Meat Board,” January 18, 1962 (courtesy of John Huston, former president of NLSMB).

<sup>347</sup> Will C. Barnes, “White House Live Stock,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, Feb 21, 1921.

<sup>348</sup> “One of Montana’s Pioneer Stockmen,” *Breeder’s Gazette*, June 16, 1921.

<sup>349</sup> Political advertisement, August 1, 1924, Casement Papers.

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<sup>350</sup> Phil Tiemeyer, "Technology and Gay Identity: the case of the pre-Second World War Male Flight Attendant," *History and Technology* 27 no. 2 (June 2011): 155–181.

<sup>351</sup> David J. Goldberg, *Discontented America: The United States in the 1920s* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press University, 1999), 153–9.

<sup>352</sup> Suzanne Orr, "Deporting the Red Menace: Russian Immigrants, Progressive Reformers, and the First Red Scare in Chicago, 1917–1920," PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2010.

<sup>353</sup> Daniel J. Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 97.

<sup>354</sup> "Man needs Meat," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, August 1921.

<sup>355</sup> "Says meat eaters are men who have ruled the world," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, December 1923; Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 97.

<sup>356</sup> "Says Meat Eaters are Men who have ruled the World," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, December 1923; Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 97.

<sup>357</sup> "Says Years of Trial prove the Value of Meat in the Diet," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, June 1926.

<sup>358</sup> "Japan wants Meat," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, July 1925.

<sup>359</sup> Wilson J. Warren, *Meat makes People Powerful: A Global History of the Modern Era* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2018), 66.

<sup>360</sup> "Meat stimulates Growth," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, February 1929.

<sup>361</sup> "Work of Meat Board told," *Kansas Stockman*, August 1, 1924.

<sup>362</sup> NLSMB Executive Meeting notes, June 1933, page 58, Box 290, NLSMB Records.



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<sup>363</sup> Susan Lederer, “Treat with Meat: Protein, Palatability, and Pernicious Anaemia in the 1920s-30s,” in David Cantor, Christian Bonah, Matthias Dorries, eds. *Meat, Medicine, and Human Health in the Twentieth Century* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010).

<sup>364</sup> Leon L. Miller, “George Hoyt Whipple, 1878–1976: A Biographical Memoir” National Academy of Sciences (1995), 371–93; G. H. Whipple, F. S. Robscheit-Robbins “Blood Regeneration in Severe Anemia,” *American Journal of Physiology* 72 (May 1925), 395–407; Fernandus Payne, “A History of the National Research Council, 1919–1933,” *Science* 78 no. 2014 (August 1933): 93–5; “Meat Best of Food, Says Noted Expert,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, April 1922.

<sup>365</sup> Walter Bruno Gratzer, *Terrors of the Table: The Curious History of Nutrition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 180–1.

<sup>366</sup> G. H. Whipple, F. S. Robscheit-Robbins “Blood Regeneration in Severe Anemia,” *American Journal of Physiology* 72 (May 1925), 395.

<sup>367</sup> Miller, “George Hoyt Whipple,” 381; Whipple, “Blood Regeneration,” 395.

<sup>368</sup> Miller, “George Hoyt Whipple,” 382.

<sup>369</sup> Arthur J. May, *University of Rochester History, 1850–1962* (University of Rochester, 1977), accessed through [www.rbscp.lib.rochester.edu](http://www.rbscp.lib.rochester.edu)

<sup>370</sup> “Richardson says that Meat has high Biological Value,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, August 1923, W. D. Richardson was the head of the committee on nutrition for the IAMP; E. B. Forbes and Raymond W. Swift, “The Iron Content of Meats,” *Journal of Biological Chemistry* 67 (1926), 517–21, Forbes was a specialist in nutrition for the IAMP.

<sup>371</sup> “Tells why Meat will hold important place in Diet,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, March 1925.

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<sup>372</sup> *Swift and Co. 1929 Yearbook*, Issued for the 44th annual shareholders meeting, January 10, 1929, 48–49; Bonah, ed., *Meat, Medicine and Human Health*, 48.

<sup>373</sup> NLSMB Executive Meeting notes, June 1933, p. 59, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>374</sup> “Anemia,” and “Anemic,” *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. and C. Merriam, 1953), 34.

<sup>375</sup> “Projects undertaken by Meat Board,” *Kansas Stockman*, May 1, 1933; Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, p 82–4, Box 290 NLSMB Records.

<sup>376</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, p 82–4, Box 290 NLSMB Records.

<sup>377</sup> Scott Cutlip, *The Unseen Power: Public Relations. A History* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), 580.

<sup>378</sup> “Meat for Health!” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, February 1924.

<sup>379</sup> ANLSA convention 1930, p. 55; Cutlip, *Unseen Power*, 101. Cutlip notes that Pen Dudley, chairman of the IAMPs Public Relations Bureau, convinced the IAMP to fund the Stefansson experiment.

<sup>380</sup> “Stefansson gives Report on Meat Diet Experiment,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, April 1928.

<sup>381</sup> “All meat Diet is Successful, says Doctor,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, September 1929, does indicate that IAMP supplied funds for experiment while other articles do not. For popular articles that do not identify the role of the IAMP in the experiment see “Stefansson Testing Meat Diet Theory: Explorer undergoing Observation,” *New York Times*, February 28, 1928; “Stefansson thrives on Meat and Water: Three Weeks' Test at Bellevue,” *New York Times*, March 22, 1928; “Find Meat Diet Aids Disease Resistance: Stefansson and Andersen Show,” *New York Times*, July 10, 1929; Clarence W. Lieb, “The Effects on Human Beings of a Twelve Month’s exclusive Meat

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Diet based on intensive Clinical and Laboratory Studies on two Arctic Explorers living under average conditions in a New York Climate,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 93(1) (July 1929): 20–2.

<sup>382</sup> NLSMB Executive Meeting notes, June 1930, pp. 201–5, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>383</sup> C. Robert Moulton, "Is a Meat Diet a Menace?" *Journal of the American Medical Association* 95 no. 23 (December 1930):1762; L. H. Newburgh, "Is a Meat Diet a Menace?" *Journal of the American Medical Association* 96 no. 4 (January 1931): 289–90.

<sup>384</sup> Denise Mafra, et al., “Red Meat intake in Chronic Kidney Disease Patients: Two sides of the Coin,” *Nutrition* 46 (2018), 26–32; Francesco Buscemi, *From Body Fuel to Universal Poison: Cultural History of Meat from 1900 to the Present* (Gewerbestrasse, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 105.

<sup>385</sup> Horowitz, *Putting Meat on the American Table*, 3.

<sup>386</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, 1933, p 173 Box 290 NLSMB Records.

<sup>387</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, 1933, p 174, 175, Box 290 NLSMB Records.

<sup>388</sup> “Nation shifts Diet to improve Health,” *New York Times*, May 9, 1930.

<sup>389</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1933, p 185 Box 290 NLSMB Records; Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, p 88–98 Box 290 NLSMB Records.

<sup>390</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1933, p 185 Box 290 NLSMB Records.

<sup>391</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, p 89, Box 290 NLSMB Records.

<sup>392</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, p 98, Box 290 NLSMB Records.

<sup>393</sup> Leo K. Campbell, “Weight Reduction with High Protein Diets,” *Journal of Laboratory and Clinical Medicine* 20 no. 8 (1935): 843–9.

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<sup>394</sup> Walter H. Eddy, "Eat Meat and keep Slim," *Good Housekeeping* 106, no. 5 (May 1938): 90, 164.

<sup>395</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1933, p 181 Box 290 NLSMB Records

<sup>396</sup> Morris Fishbein, *A History of the American Medical Association, 1847 to 1947* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1947), 936, 938.

<sup>397</sup> Fishbein, *History of the American Medical Association*, 937, 938.

<sup>398</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1933, p 170 Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>399</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1933, p 176, 177, 184, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>400</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, p 74, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>401</sup> "Here are Facts about Meat accepted by Medical Group," *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, November 1933.

## **Chapter 6 - Developing a “Meat Consciousness:” Shaping Cattle and Consumption through Science**

In 1929, a friend of packing magnate F. Edson White sent a “roast of beef” as a Christmas present to ANLSA President Luke Brite. Though little gestures like these helped cement the good will between leading stockmen and big packers, this one struck President Brite with special significance. The roast itself came from a prize-winning bull from the International Livestock Show in Chicago. Brite wrote that upon first glance all he saw was a “superb roast,” but on a second look he “visualized the cooperation of the several agencies necessary to produce beef of this high degree of excellence.”<sup>402</sup> He praised the expertise of growers, feeders, and packers that made his Christmas dinner possible. Brite, however, may not have grasped how intimately the packers had been involved in shaping the meat on his plate.

The NLSMB was the embodiment of collaboration, and one of its primary goals was to boost meat consumption. It, along with the big meat packers, attempted to achieve this by coordinating the industry in many ways. Packers took the lead in standardizing the product from farm to table. Industry-led and voluntary coordination and standardization are hallmarks of associationalism. The Meat Board was not simply a partner, but the prime mover behind some of the largest cooperative initiatives within the livestock industry, such as meat exhibits, intercollegiate meat judging, and the national quality and palatability tests. These initiatives aimed at creating greater uniformity of product according to objective, industry directed standards as well as to subjective, consumer-driven standards. Experts in the form of livestock show judges, government researchers, and university scientists, discovered and created these standards and imposed those standards on stockmen and consumers in various ways. The meat packers acted as interpreters of consumer demand, and livestock show judges chose winners based on their

acceptability to the packers. Finally, the packers and the Meat Board aimed to promote meat consciousness among the youth through support of 4-H and the creation of meat identification contests specifically for 4-H'ers.

By the late 1920s, the Meat Board members had begun to use the term “meat consciousness” to describe American society’s newfound and heightened awareness of meat. The members of the board credited their organization with building this meat consciousness, but they wanted even greater awareness and of course, greater consumption of meat. The board aimed to develop meat consciousness among three different groups: researchers, producers, and consumers. The Meat Board used research to align the type of livestock raised on the farm and the methods for raising it to what consumers wanted at the table. The Meat Board and packers stimulated meat research in order to understand, shape, and sometimes cater to consumer demand. With a more scientific understanding of consumer desire, the Meat Board and packers tried to get producers to change their methods to fit the research findings. By the late 1920s, industry leaders used the term “meat consciousness” to measure the effectiveness of their propaganda among consumers and within the scientific community. By 1930, Wyoming rancher and chairman of the Meat Board Charles Carey could marvel at how well the board had achieved its goal in developing a “national beef consciousness” which had “never before existed in this country.”<sup>403</sup>

Government researchers and scientists at land grant colleges and at the USDA played key roles in developing this meat consciousness on behalf of the meat industry. Jim Hightower first identified the close relationship between government and agribusiness. Hightower warned about the land grant complex—that trio of agricultural colleges, experiment stations, and the extension service—lending itself to the service of big business. The purpose behind the creation of these institutions, through the Morrill Act of 1862, the Hatch Act of 1887, and the Smith-Lever Act of

1914, was to serve the rural countryside, but Hightower found that since the 1940s, the complex had used its tax-supported resources to “serve an elite of private, corporate interests in rural America.”<sup>404</sup> The land grant complex focuses on making agriculture scientific, efficient, and a business. Hightower identified the “three way alliance between agricultural science, agribusiness, and government” that still exists today. Hightower did not trace the origins of this complex back far enough, noting that the government did not join the alliance until the 1930s under the New Deal.<sup>405</sup> Later studies have shown that experiment stations and land grant colleges served only an elite even as far back as the late nineteenth century. In Oklahoma, for instance, the agricultural colleges only taught large scale, white farmers how to become more efficient and how to take advantage of farm machinery, ignoring Indians, African Americans, and poor whites.<sup>406</sup> This chapter shows how the USDA, experiment stations, and agricultural college professors developed a closer relationship with the meat industry by looking to the Meat Board and packers for leadership. This relationship followed associationalist lines—one where agribusiness held the upper hand. The Meat Board used the public researchers, who were eager collaborators, to further its own interest.

The Meat Board even helped to professionalize the study of meat by creating the cooperative meat investigations, which eventually led to the formation of the American Meat Science Association. “Meats men” of the colleges and experiment stations shared with industry a desire to boost meat consumption and legitimize their field. Land Grant complex workers were grateful to the Meat Board and served industry in an associationalist spirit of cooperation for the common good.

The dynamic general manager of the Meat Board, Roscoe C. Pollock, was part of the land grant complex prior to joining the Meat Board. He was also responsible for most of the initiatives

undertaken by the board in the 1920s. As will be seen, he created the Meat Exhibits, was instrumental in establishing the Quality and Palatability Studies, and in creating the intercollegiate meat judging contests. Pollock was born in Martinsburg, Iowa in 1888 and earned a B.S. in Animal Husbandry from the Iowa State College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (later known as Iowa State University) in 1913. After graduation, he worked as a county agent in Minnesota, assistant county agent leader at South Dakota State College, then as county agent leader in North Dakota before becoming director of extension for the Holstein-Frisian Association in 1919—the same year that he earned a M.S. in Agriculture from Iowa State College. He served as director of extension until he was chosen as the general manager of the Meat Board in 1923, serving in that capacity until retiring in 1954.<sup>407</sup> Pollock thought in terms of public relations and advertising. He wanted to promote meat, the meat industry, and the Meat Board and most, if not all, of his undertakings as general manager furthered these aims.

One of Pollock's first ideas as general manager, in the early 1920s, was something called "meat exhibits" which were designed to teach consumers about many different aspects of meat. Pollock came up with the idea of meat exhibits as a way to educate the consumer about the benefits of meat, the different cuts, how to cook them and later on as a way of disseminating the latest meat research. The main feature of a meat exhibit was essentially a massive cooler with a glass front and glass sides wherein different types of meat and cuts were displayed. These meat exhibits varied in size and were usually displayed at large and small public gatherings such as state and county fairs and livestock shows.

The first meat exhibit was held in 1924, in Chicago, probably at the International Live Stock Show. According to Alvin Sanders, editor of the *Breeder's Gazette* and main promoter of the Better Beef movement, the management of the International—especially A. G. Leonard,



President of Union Stockyards—sponsored the first exhibit. In 1900 Sanders and Leonard had cooperated on forming the International Live Stock Show and maintained a friendship afterward. Leonard shared virtually all of the same aims as the Meat Board. As Sanders related, Leonard “thought of this exposition in terms of its educational value in setting standards for America’s livestock breeders,” especially in showing them what was “under the hide.” The International management wanted the breeders to see what retail cuts from different cattle looked like, as a way to educate them about the product they were raising. Leonard wanted a unique building for the meat exhibit, so he hired a crew to construct a replica of Shakespeare’s home at Stratford on Avon because the famous playwright’s father apparently operated a “meat shoppe” out of the house. Sanders stated that the exhibit was incredibly popular and was even visited by President Calvin Coolidge and his wife.<sup>408</sup>

Industry leaders initially saw the meat exhibits as educational for housewives but later realized their value as propaganda for producers as well. Meat Board General Manager Pollock told A. Sykes, former president of the Corn Belt Meat Producers, to check out an exhibit at the Spencer, Iowa, fair that was being put on by the unfortunately named, Miss Plumpky. Sykes initially thought that a meat exhibit at a rural fair—where ninety percent of the visitors were farmers—was a waste of time because farmers already knew about livestock and meat. However, he became convinced of its value after hearing farmers and stockmen saying things like “now I see where my twenty-five cents is going.” This was a reference to the board’s difficult campaign of raising its fees to producers. Sykes explained to the Meat Board that “we must educate the producer as well,” as the consumer. Meat exhibits at rural fairs served as great public relations for the board because, as Sykes explained, “this is where he [the farmer] comes in direct touch with the people who represent the National Live Stock and Meat Board.” Farm Bureau leader and Meat

Board member Charles Hearst thought that the meat exhibits were a way that “we can advertise our own products in a very beneficial way to the industry.”<sup>409</sup>

The meat exhibits were almost always collaborative efforts between stockmen, packers, government, and other farm organizations. The International exhibit in 1925 was, as Sanders explained, “a vast cooperative project” between the USDA, experiment stations, the IAMP, the King Ranch in Texas, and Sni-A-Bar Farms of Grain Valley, Missouri.<sup>410</sup> The Meat Board noted that the USDA, specifically the Bureau of Animal Industry, copied the meat exhibit idea and set up its own exhibits in different places around the country. The Farm Bureau cooperated to a great degree in displaying meat exhibits as well through its permanent Meat Board member Charles Hearst—president of the Iowa Farm Bureau. Hearst and fellow Meat Board member, A. Sykes, former president of the Corn Belt Meat Producers Association, oversaw the meat exhibits in Iowa, which were held at the Iowa State Fair as well as many other fairs in rural parts of the state. O. M. Plummer, a stockman and originator of the “Truth in Meats” idea, fostered the spread of meat exhibits on the Pacific Coast and boasted of one exhibit he helped create that was twenty-eight feet long, eighteen feet wide, and eight feet deep with meat for the exhibits supplied by “Swift and Company.” Most often local or national meat packing companies donated the meats for these exhibits, which was a visible sign of sacrifice for the good of the industry.<sup>411</sup>

In addition to collaborating with the Farm Bureau, university professors of animal husbandry cooperated with the Meat Board as well. Between 1893 and 1919, only about ten universities offered courses in what today would be considered meat science. The “meats men” as they were called, were few in number and were hungry for respect and funding from their institutions. The Meat Board, through its various initiatives, gave meats men professional legitimacy and got consumers and scientists interested in their fledgling field.<sup>412</sup> Many professors

of meats courses participated enthusiastically in the Meat Board projects. With zeal sometimes bordering on the embarrassing, the meats men ardently supported the board and its work.

The Meat Board executive minutes give a sense of the extent that animal husbandry professors worked at the ground level to implement Meat Board ideas. One example involves Professor R. O. Roth of the meats division, of the department of animal husbandry at Ohio State University who was an eager collaborator. In 1933, he proudly explained to the Meat Board that his department had done a good job of making the public “meat conscious” and that the meat industry had been spreading “gospel” and not “propaganda” like other industries. Perhaps his zeal for meat was why his department was criticized by colleagues for “going commercial.” Roth was trusted enough by the Meat Board that it “delegated” the work of putting on a meat exhibit in Columbus, Ohio to him. Another professor, William Loeffel of the animal husbandry department at the University of Nebraska, was in charge of the meat exhibit at the Nebraska State Fair.<sup>413</sup> Meat Board member O. M. Plummer boasted that a meat exhibit had been copied by “college people out West” and displayed in “every little county fair in Oregon” and Washington.<sup>414</sup> The Meat Board found professors at multiple universities eager to cooperate in its work.<sup>415</sup>

The Meat Board invented the meat exhibit to inform consumers and producers and interest in them spread rapidly within the livestock industry. Various groups including the USDA and land grant colleges eagerly put on their own meat exhibits. The exhibits were an effective way for the Meat Board to spread its message through many different agencies. Getting other groups to do the work of the Meat Board was also a major part in the board’s next big undertaking.

In the mid-1920s the Meat Board launched one of its most audacious ventures: the national quality and palatability tests, later known as the Cooperative Meat Investigations. These were coordinated studies on meat from farm to table conducted by the USDA and around twenty-four

state experiment stations. This study and five others were the first attempts “to conduct cooperative research under formal organization.” In keeping with the mission of the experiment stations, these studies were ultimately meant to benefit the producers as well as the consumers. Producers, at least from the ANLSA, supported the Cooperative Meat Investigations for “experiments of great value” to the industry. The cooperators, mostly directors of experiment stations and USDA bureau chiefs but also a couple members of the NLSMB, met annually to share research and craft future experiments. They created committees for many facets of the industry including on grades and measurements, on lard projects, on cookery, on methods, and even a committee on committees. The role of the Meat Board in creating and fostering the palatability studies has been overlooked in the historical literature, giving the impression that the project originated within the USDA or with the experiment stations. Further, the notion also prevails that experiment station workers labored objectively for their rural patrons. On the contrary, the Meat Board acted almost like an invisible hand behind the study and the experiment stations who voluntarily did the work of big business.<sup>416</sup> Through the Cooperative Meat Investigations, the Meat Board effectively channeled public resources into the study of meat.

In September 1924, the Meat Board called a conference of specialists from the USDA and the experiment stations to discuss the need for information regarding the “factors which influence the production and quality of meat.”<sup>417</sup> The attendees at this meeting appointed a committee to make further recommendations. This committee consisted of F. B. Mumford, director of the Missouri Experiment Station, as chairman; M. D. Helser, chief in meat investigations of the Iowa Experiment Station; H. J. Gramlich, animal husbandman, Nebraska Experiment Station; C. R. Moulton, director of the bureau of nutrition of the IAMP; and E. W. Sheets, chief, animal husbandry division, USDA. After five meetings, the committee presented its recommendations to

the American Society of Animal Production in late 1924. Its recommendations resulted in the quality and palatability studies.<sup>418</sup>

While the studies were meant to benefit both consumers and producers, the cooperators also had other aims, such as to standardize and stabilize the livestock industry in general. The committee hoped that the studies would “ultimately establish more uniform grades and standards of meat production which would place the distribution of meats upon a more satisfactory basis.” It aimed to study the “feeding, slaughtering, distribution, and cooking” and to see which of these might be “more completely controlled” in order to influence quality and palatability. The committee’s list of factors that influenced quality and palatability included feeding, breeding, age, sex, handling, condition, exercise, glandular secretions, slaughtering, and methods of cooking. Reminiscent of Thomas E. Wilson’s goal of establishing incontrovertible facts for the meat industry, the committee wanted to answer these questions and bring them from “doubt” to “assured fact.” The cooperators hoped to place all facets of the livestock industry on a “sounder basis” through “scientific research.” The committee recommended that the findings of the tests be given to producers, packers, and other members of the industry. In early 1925, the committee gave its report and its recommendations to many experiment stations who quickly commenced meat research.<sup>419</sup>

Much of the money for the experiments being conducted across the country on meat came from the recently passed Purnell Act. By 1920, many experiment stations were hurting for funds and therefore looked to Congress for money. In 1920, the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (AAACES) appointed three of its members to draft a bill that eventually became the Purnell Act—with only slight modifications of the original bill. One of the men who helped draft the legislation, and who was actually responsible for the phrasing of the bill,

was F. B. Mumford of the Missouri Experiment Station.<sup>420</sup> The bill languished in committee while the AAACES lobbied Congress for passage. It was finally reported out and approved by Congress in 1925. It provided a maximum appropriation for each experiment station of \$60,000 annually for research. This amount was in addition to the \$30,000 already available through the Hatch Act. Mumford, as mentioned previously, was also the chairman of the quality and palatability study's very first committee and he played a major role in the studies thereafter. He noted that because the national meat project was one of four national projects approved by the directors of experiment stations at the annual meeting of the Association of Land Grant Colleges, it should be easy for experiment stations to get Purnell funds for their quality and palatability studies.<sup>421</sup>

Funding for these projects did not have to come from the Purnell funds, but much of it did. The Iowa State Home Economics Experiment Station for one, eagerly set to work submitting projects, not all dealing with meat, in answer to E. W. Sheets' call for proposals for making use of Purnell funds.<sup>422</sup> The Purnell Act created a specific fund that experiment stations could use for special projects that had to be approved in advance. Secretary of Agriculture Jardine emphasized that experiment stations should not use these funds to pay for day to day operations.<sup>423</sup>

Most of the participants in the studies, whether from the public or private sector, emphasized the need for smaller cattle. Many speakers at the first conference stressed that the public wanted "light cuts of beef." Consumers, they averred, considered the fat that can be "mechanically separa[t]ed" from "heavy, highly finished cattle . . . as waste." The members of the conference then, regarded one of their most important jobs as determining the proper degree of finish with the least amount of fat trimming. This idea that consumers wanted lighter cuts of beef and less fat trimming caused more leaders in the industry to urge producers to market their cattle sooner.<sup>424</sup>

The quality and palatability studies also served as a way to centralize control of experiments conducted at experiment stations and USDA laboratories. It gave direction and focus to experiments, tying them to a broader undertaking. Each participating institution was required to submit its experiment plans to one of the committees for coordination. At the annual conference, the committees would report on their research and make recommendations.<sup>425</sup> As E. W. Sheets explained it, the central conference listened to the research reports of the experiment stations and gave suggestions on ways to improve their experiments. The central committee would plan new work in advance, write up a method to follow, and see which experiment stations might be interested. The experiment stations undertook the pre-designed research programs and the central committee checked up on their progress at the end of the year at the national conference.<sup>426</sup>

The palatability studies also serve as another example of the third-party technique. As mentioned previously, the Meat Board made the initial call for the studies and played a key organizing role. The Meat Board financed at least one of the early meetings of the conference, from 1926 to 1927 for \$2,500, then gave the study group \$1,000 a year, until at least 1931. The attendees of the 1926 meeting gave a rising vote of thanks to R. C. Pollock, general manager of the Meat Board for the cooperation of his group and for its financial support—something it did not do for anyone else.<sup>427</sup> However, the Meat Board's role in the studies is not readily apparent. The published annual studies only carried the name of the USDA and the state agricultural experiment stations and did not formally credit the Meat Board. The USDA was responsible for publishing the results of the studies annually and all “public references” to any research conducted by experiment stations, USDA, or any other cooperating institution was supposed to be referred to as “A study of the factors influencing the quality and palatability of meat.”<sup>428</sup> R. C. Pollock told fellow Meat Board members that the experiment station bulletins on meat by different people and institutions,

like Jessie Cline from the University of Missouri, were “authentic” presumably because they originated outside of the purview of the Meat Board.<sup>429</sup>

Under the direction of R. C. Pollock, the Meat Board’s efforts at boosting meat research were successful. According to Earl W. Sheets, chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, and a leader in the palatability tests, meat research was almost non-existent prior to the Meat Board’s efforts to promote it. In fact, he credited the Meat Board with awakening interest among scientists in researching meat. In 1930, he explained to the Meat Board that “if there is any one thing that this Board has done that has been worth while it has been to create in the minds of research people a meat consciousness.”<sup>430</sup> Sheets recognized that the Meat Board propaganda had been successful among scientists. A year later Pollock noticed the same interest, that the board had “all of these colleges working on this thing.” He even boasted that the colleges “will do anything we ask them to.”<sup>431</sup> By the early 1930s, experiment station workers, university professors, and USDA scientists eagerly did the work of the Meat Board.

The NLSMB was somewhat like the watchmaker god who makes a watch, winds it, and lets it function on its own without interfering further. In a conversation with fellow Meat Board members, W. H. Tomhave summed it up best when he stated that the cooperative meat project was important because it had given the board contacts with agricultural colleges, experiment stations, and the USDA “in such a way as to carry the work of the board into the field in a manner that would have been absolutely impossible without cooperating in that way.”<sup>432</sup> Pollock candidly told the board that “contact with all these different industries” including the “United States Department of Agriculture, universities, colleges . . . American Society of Animal Production” was about “public relations.” At the Meat Board’s semi-annual meetings, many researchers would read their reports to the assembled board members, who seemed to consider them boring. In convincing his



fellow board members to listen to these “drawn out, dry” reports from the Cooperative Meat Investigations Pollock told them that “it is worth sitting to listen to that talk for twenty minutes when you think of the hundreds of thousands of dollars that is being spent on that type of work” by the government.<sup>433</sup> Clearly, he, and most likely every other member, recognized that the cooperative meat project was doing the work of the board without public reference to it and without the board having to fund it.

While General Manager of the Meat Board R. C. Pollock and Robert Moulton of the IAMP played leading roles in the central command of the quality studies, the Meat Board and the meat packers were not well represented at the annual conferences of the quality and palatability studies early on. This was in keeping with the third-party technique. It was not until the 1934 conference that these groups greatly increased their presence at the annual conferences of the Cooperative Meat Investigations. The Conference Committee Report of that year listed sixty-one names in attendance out of which nine were representatives from Armour, Wilson, and Swift—the first time that the packers appear on the list of attendees at one of these conferences—nine from the NLSMB, and three from the IAMP.<sup>434</sup>

USDA Bureau Chief Sheets wanted the Meat Board to play a more active role in lobbying the federal government and shaping the agenda of the Cooperative Meat Investigations. He told the Meat Board to stop investing its own money into the palatability tests because it was going along well on its own. He asked the Meat Board to instead create a committee to sit in “counsel” with him twice a year to argue against the dairy and poultry interests for meat research money. He said that the committee should speak regularly with the secretary of agriculture, the assistant secretary, and the director of research who were all from “the Middle West,” and who should understand the needs of the livestock industry. He also said that the board should create programs

for research that should be done by the experiment stations and the USDA and submit it to the palatability study. In order to conform to the Purnell Act, he told them to first tell how their proposed research would help the producer and secondly how it would help the consumer. Everett Brown of the Meat Board said that “I think we will accept your invitation.”<sup>435</sup> Sheets was encouraging the Meat Board to use the palatability studies to further its own aims.

The quality and palatability studies focused on discovering consumer desire and the creation of objective standards of meat production and cooking. At the same time, the packers and USDA officials began to take account of consumer demand for lighter cuts of meat as reflected in new cattle grade definitions. The shift was essentially to give the best grade, “prime,” to younger, lighter weight steers than to older heavier ones as had been done in the past. For instance, in 1920, the Chicago Market classified prime steers as between 1,500 and 1,600 pounds. In 1924, the new grades issued by the USDA listed prime steers as generally between 500 and 700 pounds and below three years of age. The big packers began to pay lower prices for heavier and highly finished cattle, which upset many cattlemen who still raised cattle according to the old grade.<sup>436</sup>

Some producers, even members of the Meat Board, disagreed over the new definition of the prime grade in cattle and suspected that the packers were using it as a way to profit from feeders. Cattle grades were based on three different areas: conformation, quality, and finish. Conformation described the general build of the animal and how much meat it carried; quality essentially described the tenderness and marbling of the meat; and finish referred to the “thickness, color, character, and distribution of fat.”<sup>437</sup> Feeders who followed the older method of holding their cattle until they were three or four years old and fattening them to over 1200 pounds were frustrated with the new standards of grading. Joseph Mercer, secretary of the KLA, and F. E. Mollin, secretary of the ANLSA, explained to meat packing giant Thomas E. Wilson that many

producers were opposed to government and packer grading because they claimed that it caused them to lose money. According to the older way of evaluating livestock, these producers knew that their cattle fit the standards of prime: they exhibited excellent conformation, were well finished, and of premium quality. These cattlemen were frustrated because the standards changed dramatically in such a short time. Consequently, their investment—their steers—received a lower price because they graded lower. These feeders objected to the new standard of quality in cattle based on consumer demand.

In the summer of 1933, Joseph Mercer pressed Thomas Wilson on the issue. Mercer claimed that his and other people's cattle were well bred but not receiving the prime grade that they should have. He wanted to know how the grade was made and who was making it. These were curious questions because Mercer could have easily found answers in a USDA bulletin. Mercer offered an example from his own experience saying that he brought two carloads to the Kansas City market and the commission man cut out twenty-seven from the lot and sold them at \$4.40 and the others at \$4.90. The reason he gave was that the first twenty-seven were each a little over 1200 pounds and the rest were a little over 1100 pounds. This explanation was not out of the ordinary. Prices varied from day to day and differed according to grade. With an expert eye, the commission man determined the grade of a "lot" or group of cattle based on conformation and finish. Each grade carried a price range that also varied by day. The commission man would then negotiate a price with a packer-buyer that was within the price range for their grade. Mercer claimed that the twenty-seven were better finished than the others and he wanted to know why they brought less money. Here, Mercer based his idea of well finished on the older definition of prime. Wilson told him to go to New York or Boston and see how his meat sold—people were not buying the "very extreme heavy, highly finished stuff." Mercer wanted to "advise" the public that

highly finished meat was the best beef, but no one else on the board wanted to do this.<sup>438</sup> When they continued the discussion in December, Wilson admitted that demand factored into grading. To Mercer, this meant that grade was not strictly objective, but relative because it factored in consumer desire. Mercer viewed this as unfair and perhaps as pandering to the ignorant masses.<sup>439</sup> The packers in this instance, adapted to rather than tried to shape, consumer demand. Meat grading was another way that packers and the government shaped the type of cattle that stockmen raised. Stockmen like Mercer may have fumed at first, but eventually acquiesced. The new grading standards offer another example of producer acceptance of packer leadership.

Mercer and Wilson were really arguing over the meaning of quality in livestock. Mercer argued for an objective standard, while Wilson maintained that grading was at least partly subjective—based on consumer desire. Mercer thought that prime, being the top grade, should reflect set characteristics and should not change according to uneducated demand. The meat industry has struggled ever since to determine objective standards for grades. A 1950s study on palatability found that consumer preference even changed according to the city. For instance, St. Louis consumers preferred prime but Stillwater, Oklahoma, consumers preferred commercial over the top three grades.<sup>440</sup> This discrepancy prompted a couple agricultural economists to wonder if retail and trade emphases “reflect response to consumer demand, or have consumers, through lack of knowledge or of alternative choices, been induced to buy more or less of particular grades than, under different circumstances, they might have desired?”<sup>441</sup> For better or worse, the big packers served as interpreters of consumer demand and as one of the authorities on quality in livestock.

The big packers and livestock breeders worked to get producers to raise the type of cattle that met this consumer demand—whether real or perceived. Dr. Robert Moulton, head of the department of nutrition of the IAMP and collaborator on the quality and palatability studies,

explained the purpose of the IAMP's department of livestock as being to "conserve and improve the supply of livestock" and "to help develop types of animals that more nearly meet the demands of the consumer."<sup>442</sup> As early as 1922, the *National Provisioner* noted that the IAMP's committee on improved livestock breeding had stimulated "great interest" among livestock producers to "raise better livestock."<sup>443</sup> Livestock breeders supported the improvement of breeds and greater conformity to type in the different species. The emphasis on conformity prompted two experiment station researchers to conclude that the "role of the breeders [became] essentially that of 'designing' cattle."<sup>444</sup> The shift from heavy cattle to lighter cattle was most evident in the livestock show winners from the early 1900s to the 1930s.

Industry leaders used contests as a way of getting the producers to conform their cattle to the packer's interpretation of consumer demand. Livestock judging, both done by students as well as experts, served as a way to standardize the type of cattle raised by stockmen. Judgement, in this case, involved the determination of how well an animal conformed to the new standard of grading for smaller and younger cattle. The directors of the largest show, the International Live Stock Exposition in Chicago, chose judges who shared their outlook.

The livestock shows shaped cattle through their judges who were chosen by the directors of the shows—leaders in the livestock industry. The oldest and most prestigious livestock show in the US was the International in Chicago. Though founded in the late 1800s as the fat stock show it was given new life under new leadership, especially A. G. Leonard, the head of the Chicago Union Stock Yards, in 1900. From the outset, it was a cooperative venture between all facets of the meat industry. One of its primary aims was to develop better relations between the Union Stock Yards and the livestock producers. Yet, it was also meant to influence those producers in the type of cattle that they raised. This is clearly stated by one of the other founders, Alvin Sanders, who

was the editor of the *Breeders Gazette* and the main promoter of the Better Beef movement. In his history of the International, Sanders claimed that the leaders of the livestock show “thought of this exposition in terms of its educational value in setting standards for America’s livestock breeders.”<sup>445</sup>

Livestock show judges helped shaped cattle in the manner that directors and packers wanted. There was a close connection between the men who purchased cattle for a living and thus had an eye for quality and the judging of livestock. One example is John Brown who was a cattleman, then a commission man, then became head of Armour’s cattle buying department, in which capacity he served for twenty-eight years. He was well known and liked by American cattlemen and served as a director of the International as well as a judge of carloads of cattle at the livestock show. Ed Wentworth credited Brown as being the first to give the grand champion award to a carload of yearlings, which set a new precedent for favoring younger cattle.<sup>446</sup> Indeed, the judges of carload lots were oftentimes cattle buyers from one of the big packing companies.<sup>447</sup> Who better to judge packer desire than the very employees of those companies in charge of purchasing cattle? In 1922, Wentworth himself became steward in charge of showing individual steers at the show and held that position into the 1940s.<sup>448</sup>

These judges selected cattle that were small and young. Judges tended to favor cattle around 1,000 pounds. In the late 1920s, renowned judge Walter Biggar chose a 950 pound Aberdeen Angus yearling as the winner. Biggar stated that this “grand champion is as near perfection as it is possible to make,” in part because it “show[ed] a minimum of waste and a maximum of quality.” In 1930, the directors of the International took a bold step in the direction of shaping cattle and decided to eliminate participation altogether of “aged cows,” limiting it to three-year-olds and younger. Sanders was pleased with the uniformity of the class of 1930 and

also noted the anachronism of a carload of 2090 pound steers that were typical of the type seen thirty years ago. He compared them unfavorably to the “quality of the youngsters averaging only 970 pounds.”<sup>449</sup> Even the Federal Farm Board, through C. B. Denman, suggested that “judges at fairs and stock shows in making awards might give greater consideration to the type of animals preferred . . . from a market standpoint.”<sup>450</sup>

The influence that judges had on the industry was noted by many close observers. Ed Wentworth remarked favorably that a livestock show judge—or a judge of any animal—can “have an immense influence in shaping the current and future ideals of breeders throughout the land.”<sup>451</sup> Walter Biggar, one of the most influential judges—serving in 1920, 1924, and then for ten years in a row from 1927 to 1936—was remembered by leaders in the industry for his ability to shape cattle. Henry Marshall, chairman of the board of the International stated that Biggar’s “influence upon the improvement of our American beef cattle in recognizing a type of steer that was profitable in the feedlot and acceptable to the packer became more clearly defined with each successive international that he judged.”<sup>452</sup> Alvin Sanders wrote favorably that “a common standard had been established” because everyone breeding Angus, Shorthorn, and Herefords, understood the characteristics that they needed their cattle to have in order to win with under Biggar. “His favorite type,” Sanders wrote, “was the steer that was wanted most in the open market.”<sup>453</sup> If judges selected for the type of cattle most sought in the open market, then they were essentially choosing based on the standards of the big packers.

The Meat Board also spread standardization through the invention of intercollegiate meat judging contests. Student livestock judging had been held at the International for decades, but the Meat Board created team judging. The first contest was held in 1926 at the International Live Stock Exposition in Chicago and was sponsored by the Meat Board. According to Dr. W. L. Warner, the

contest was the brainchild of General Manager Pollock and Mr. Edinger. Professor Loeffel of Nebraska, also involved in the Cooperative Meat Investigations, helped work out details of the contests. The Meat Board directed the contests, the USDA supplied most of the judges, and the packers donated the meat. Pollock also convinced the quality and palatability study group to help sponsor the first intercollegiate meat judging contest at the International.<sup>454</sup>

The contest itself was only open to students who had taken animal husbandry courses. The competitors had to judge “four representative cuts or carcasses of meat that illustrate various differences in quality” and “in conformation and finish.” These determinations were not easy, as the classes of meat were “close enough so the [students] will have to test their powers of observation and their judgement.” Surprisingly, given the sex-segregation of agricultural activities at the time, these contests were open to women as well. By 1930 there had been “ten girl’s teams” that competed in the contests. The contest featured not only beef but pork and lamb as well. At the International, the teams spent close to three hours in the “Wilson and Company coolers” inspecting and judging the various meats. They then spent about an hour and a half writing up a rationale for their choices. The first contest only featured a few teams, but by 1929 nine different states had teams that competed.<sup>455</sup>

The judging contests, as well as the meat identification contests, served as a means of standardizing meat vocabulary and quality. As Dr. W. L. Warner explained it, the meat judging contests acted as another way to develop what had already become the “trite term” of “meat consciousness.” He touted the psychological effect of competition that inspired students and professors alike to learn about meat. The contests also got the students asking their professors “why?”—why one type of marbling was superior to another, why dark meat is tougher than light, and other similar questions. Warner said that the professors had to admit that they did not know.



Warner beamed that the professors of animal husbandry and of home economics had been learning right along with the students and even competing in the judging contests themselves. For this reason, the meat judging contests helped to spur on meat research at colleges, cultivate an interest in the quality and palatability studies, and familiarize meat industry people with the new standard of grading.<sup>456</sup>

In addition to collegiate contests, livestock industry leaders also propagandized the youth with special meat competitions. The Meat Board sponsored a meat identification contest at the International Live Stock Show for youth in 4-H, but even prior to this, livestock industry leaders had taken an interest in developing meat consciousness among 4-H'ers.

Thomas E. Wilson actually played a large role in shaping the 4-H. His first contact with the program came in 1918 when at the International he came across a group of boys studying some livestock exhibits. Wilson later recalled that he sensed their “keen” interest in livestock and he desired to help them. He took the boys and their leader out to lunch and this became the first of the annual “Wilson Day Dinners” at the National 4-H Congress. In 1924 Wilson was chosen as the chairman of the 4-H National Committee. He gave of his own money to the 4-H and in 1930 donated \$5,000 in awards for “meat animal projects.” The National Committee reflected Wilson’s commitment to business and government cooperation, in this case, coordinating the two to “support boys and girls club work.”<sup>457</sup> Wilson was later known by his colleagues as the “businessman godfather of 4-H Club work.”<sup>458</sup>

Another founder and shaper of the 4-H was an Armour employee named Guy Noble. Noble worked for Armour during WWI and at the height of the war on the packers was transferred to Armour’s Bureau of Agricultural Economics to help with public relations. An agricultural journalist explained that one of Noble’s duties in his new department was to “reconcile the

conflicting viewpoints of farmers and packers.” Soon after receiving his new position, he learned of Boys and Girls Clubs through an old college roommate and immediately thought of using the clubs as a way for Armour to, as one journalist put it, “show its good will to the farming community.” He did this by convincing Armour to donate \$5,000 to pay for forty boys and girls to make the trip to the 1919 International Live Stock Show. This trip to the International Live Stock Exposition is recognized by 4-H’ers as the first National Club Congress. Imitating Armour’s example of public outreach, other packing companies began sponsoring trips for 4-H winners to the International. These club members would also get tours of the big packing plants—Wilson, Armour, and Swift. The following year, Armour and Company tripled its donation to \$15,000 for the tours. In 1921, Noble resigned from his position at Armour to create the 4-H national committee. To cover expenses after leaving Armour, he wrote articles on livestock shows for Alvin Sanders’ *Breeder’s Gazette*. The very first national committee of twelve included a fair number of livestock men such as Guy Noble; O. M. Plummer, later a member of the Meat Board; Barney Heide, secretary of the International Live Stock Exposition; R. F. Eagle, a Wilson and Co. official; and Thomas E. Wilson.<sup>459</sup> In 1923, A. G. Leonard, president of the Union Stockyards, gave Guy Noble a permanent headquarters for the 4-H National Congress at the International.<sup>460</sup>

In 1928 the Meat Board established a meat identification contest for 4-H clubs at the International. The identification contest was a cooperative effort between the Meat Board and the 4-H National Committee—which, at that time, was headed by Thomas Wilson. R. C. Pollock conducted the contests. Boys and Girls 4-H Clubs would compete locally, and then each state in which meat identification contests were held would send the winners to the International and/or the American Royal in Kansas City. At these major livestock shows, each state’s team would have to identify around twenty-five cuts of meat. Pollock explained that each boy and girl was given a

card on which they recorded their information as they looked at meat in a cooler through a window. The contest also featured a small judging component. Reflecting Thomas Wilson's heavy involvement, Pollock referred to Boys and Girls Clubs of the 4-H as "part of Mr. Wilson's party."<sup>461</sup> Alvin Sanders explained further that the 4-H children had to identify each retail cut and tell from which wholesale cut it originated. Sanders wrote that "the information they secure in the contest is helping to develop a firmer appreciation of the importance of meat and the industry of which it is the finished product."<sup>462</sup> The livestock industry leaders were interested in promoting scientific agriculture just as much as the USDA and the experiment station workers were, but the livestock leaders wanted science in the service of meat.

The leaders of the industry were keen to reach the next generation through livestock show judging and identification contests. In 1929, speaking of the meat judging in his own state of Oregon, Meat Board member O. M. Plummer remarked that it was "one of the finest foundational things that we are doing anywhere in the United States today." He was especially pleased that high school girls, home economics teachers, and future home economics teachers who saw it or participated in it would pass on the knowledge and appreciation to others. He explained that "every time we reach one girl here, we are reaching during her entire lifetime, thousands and thousands of young people."<sup>463</sup> As A. Sykes of the Meat Board bluntly put it, there was "no better way to get the parents than through the children." He also viewed it as a public relations opportunity telling the Meat Board that there was "no better way to advertise the Meat Board than through these young people." In targeting the youth, Sykes explained that the Meat Board was "building for future generations."<sup>464</sup>

Historians have pointed out that agricultural colleges, industry leaders, and agricultural workers in government tried to change farmer's rule of thumb and their tradition-bound ways of

doing things to scientific and business methods.<sup>465</sup> The meat industry promoted these same things among producers, but it also worked for its own self-interest. In the promotion of meat, the Meat Board also tried to develop its public profile among stockmen, to get other organizations to do the work of the Meat Board, to make a more acceptable product for packers and consumers, and to build meat consciousness for future generations.

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<sup>402</sup> Luke Brite, ANLSA Convention, 1929, 49.

<sup>403</sup> *The Producer*, February 1930.

<sup>404</sup> Jim Hightower, *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times* (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1973), xvii.

<sup>405</sup> Hightower, *Hard Tomatoes*, 15.

<sup>406</sup> Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, *Red Earth: Race and Agriculture in Indian Territory* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Charles Wood, "Science and Politics in the War on Cattle Diseases: The Kansas experience, 1900–1940," *Agricultural History* 54 no. 1 (1980): 82–92; James Sherow, *The Grasslands of the United States: An Environmental History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 77–78.

<sup>407</sup> "Roscoe C. Pollock," Box 445 folder "Pollock, R. C. Biography Prepared by R.B.D. 11/54," NLSMB Records.

<sup>408</sup> Alvin H. Sanders, *The Story of the International* (Chicago: International Live Stock Exposition Association, 1942), 12–5; Alvin Sanders, *At the Sign of the Stockyard Inn* (Chicago: Sanders Publishing, 1915), 14–6.

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<sup>409</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, p. 57–9, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>410</sup> Sanders, *Story of the International*, 15.

<sup>411</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1930, p. 19, 65–6, 69 Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>412</sup> Robert Bray, “The History of Meat Science,” *The 50th Anniversary History of the Reciprocal Meat Conference*, (1997).

<sup>413</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1933, p. 50, 62, 63, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>414</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1930, p. 69 Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>415</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, p. 246–48, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>416</sup> Carolyn M. Goldstein, *Creating Consumers: Home Economists in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 92. Goldstein cites the palatability study as a cooperative effort between the Bureau of Animal Industry and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, with no mention of the Meat Board, or experiment stations, for that matter. Joel P. Kunze, “The Purnell Act and Agricultural Economics,” *Agricultural History* 62, no. 2, (Spring, 1988), pp. 131–49. Kunze looks at how service intellectuals tried to help rural people during the farm crisis of the 1920s; ANLSA Annual Convention, 1931, 157; H. C. Knoblauch, E. M. Law, and W. P. Meyer, “State Agricultural Experiment Stations: A History of Research Policy and Procedure,” Miscellaneous Publication 904, Cooperative State Experiment Stations, USDA, (May 1962), 193.

<sup>417</sup> R. C. Pollock, “Meat Research in the Program of the National Live Stock and Meat Board,” *The American Society of Animal Production*, 1928, Box 16, NLSMB Records.

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<sup>418</sup> “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” February 1927, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 56–7, Box 148, NLSMB Records.

<sup>419</sup> “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” February 1927, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 56–8, Box 148, NLSMB Records.

<sup>420</sup> Kunze, “The Purnell Act,” 136–7.

<sup>421</sup> Robert Mann Lawrence, “The National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges: A Political Interest Group and its Congressional Relations, 1887–1958,” PhD diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1979, 129–31; “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” February 1927, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 62, Box 148, NLSMB Records.

<sup>422</sup> Ercel S. Eppright and Elizabeth S. Ferguson, *A Century of Home Economics at Iowa State University: A Proud Past, a Lively Present, a Future Promise* (Ames: Iowa State University Home Economics Alumni Association, 1971), 136–7.

<sup>423</sup> Knoblauch, “State Agricultural Experiment Stations,” 238.

<sup>424</sup> “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” February 1927, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 63, Box 148, NLSMB Records; “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” August 1930, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 29, Box 148, NLSMB Records.

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<sup>425</sup> “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” February 1927, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 58–62, Box 148, NLSMB Records.

<sup>426</sup> NLSMB, Executive Minutes, June 1930, 175–6, Box 290 no folders, NLSMB Records.

<sup>427</sup> “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” February 1927, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 65, 76, Box 148, NLSMB Records.

<sup>428</sup> “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” February 1927, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 62–63, Box 148, NLSMB Records.

<sup>429</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, 280, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>430</sup> NLSMB, Executive Minutes, June 1930, 170, Box 290, NLSMB Records..

<sup>431</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, 281, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>432</sup> NLSMB, Executive Minutes, June 1930, 169–70, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>433</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, p. 281–282, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>434</sup> “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” August 1934, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 62–3, Box 148, NLSMB Records.

<sup>435</sup> NLSMB, Executive Minutes, June 1930, 186–9, Box 290, NLSMB Records; Maureen Ogle page 89, claims that it was the “packer’s Meat Institute” that “persuaded eighteen of the nation’s agricultural experiment station . . . to fund meat research coordinated by the institute and the USDA.” She does not mention the Meat Board or the Cooperative Meat Investigations.

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<sup>436</sup> Clemen, *American Livestock*, 487; W. C. Davis and C. V. Whalin, USDA Bulletin no. 1246, “Market Classes and Grades of Dressed Beef,” (August 1924), 18.

<sup>437</sup> Davis, “Market Classes,” 7.

<sup>438</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1933, p. 145–54, Box 290, NLSMB Records; Clemen, *American Livestock*, 545–52.

<sup>439</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, 161–2, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>440</sup> Williams, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 512.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, 520.

<sup>442</sup> C. Robert Moulton, “The Purpose and Plan of the Institute of American Meat Packers,” *Journal of Chemical Education* 8, no. 11 (November 1931), 2166–7.

<sup>443</sup> “Livestock Breeding Improves,” *National Provisioner*, May 20, 1922.

<sup>444</sup> Elmer Kiehl and V. James Rhodes, “Historical Development of Beef Quality and Grading Standards,” Research Bulletin 728, February 1960 University of Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, 9.

<sup>445</sup> Sanders, *The Story of the International*, 13.

<sup>446</sup> Ed Wentworth, “Builders of the Shorthorn Breed: James Brown” Box 2 Folder “On other Topics: Biographies of Cattlemen,” Edward Wentworth Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie. Hereafter cited as Wentworth Papers.

<sup>447</sup> Sanders, *The Story of the International*.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>449</sup> Sanders, *The Story of the International*, 178–9, 191.



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<sup>450</sup> “Producer must Satisfy Consumer Tastes, According to C. B. Denman,” *Meat and Live Stock Digest*, April 1932.

<sup>451</sup> Ed Wentworth, “Speaking of Judges,” Box 10, folder “Wentworth on other topics: Speaking of Judges,” no date, Wentworth Papers.

<sup>452</sup> “Special release from International Live Stock Exposition,” Wentworth Papers.

<sup>453</sup> “Obituary: Walter Biggars,” Wentworth Papers.

<sup>454</sup> “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” October 1926, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 73, Box 148, NLSMB Records; NLSMB, Executive Minutes, December 1929, 60–2, Box 290, NLSMB Records; Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1930, 19, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>455</sup> “A Study of the Factors which influence the Quality and Palatability of Meat,” October 1926, issued by the Animal Husbandry Division, Bureau of Animal Industry, USDA, 73, Box 148, NLSMB Records; NLSMB, Executive Minutes, December 1929, 60–2, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>456</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1930, 19–24, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>457</sup> James T. Veeder, *From Dream to Reality: A History of the National 4-H Service Committee, 1921–1971* (U.S.A, no date, but probably 1972), 4, 15; Gabriel Rosenberg, *The 4-H Harvest: Sexuality and the State in Rural America*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 78–9.

<sup>458</sup> Franklin M. Reck, *The 4-H Story: A History of 4-H Club Work* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1951), 191.

<sup>459</sup> Veeder, *From Dream to Reality*, 5–7, 15; Reck, *The 4-H Story*, 173–4, 176.

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<sup>460</sup> Reck, *The 4-H Story*, 186.

<sup>461</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1929, 61, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>462</sup> Sanders, *The Story of the International*, 176.

<sup>463</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1929, 59, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>464</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1933, 125, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>465</sup> Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory*; Sherow, *Grasslands of the United States*.

## **Chapter 7 - Consumer Manipulation: How the Meat Board Home Economics Department tried to shape opinion among Housewives**

Inez Searles Willson served as the head of the home economics department for the National Live Stock and Meat Board throughout the 1920s and most of the 1930s. She held a variety of positions before coming to the Meat Board in the early 1920s that included teaching home economics at the University of Wisconsin, doing extension work in North Dakota, and managing the Refectory at the Art Institute of Chicago. By 1929 her commitment to the cause of meat was clear. At an annual meeting of the Meat Board that year she explained that the home economics department needed to double down on its outreach to consumers. She defined the purpose of the department of home economics as attempting “to reach the consuming public through every possible channel.” She explained to the board the need to not only maintain the “channels” that it had developed over “the past years,” but that “they must be cut deeper, and new ones must be found.”<sup>466</sup> Willson was interested in promoting meat more than helping the consumer.

The Meat Board, the embodiment of collaboration between producers and packers, looked to control all links in the food chain. In pursuit of this goal, it brought representatives of each of the different interests in the livestock industry together. The Meat Board had members from producer associations, farm groups, packers, livestock exchanges, and retailers, so it would only be fitting that it would contain representation from consumers. The Meat Board had many consumer liaisons in the form of home economists, but these women were not actually members of the board, but its employees. While board members respected the home economist’s ability and advice, institutionally they were junior partners of sorts in this associational order. Groups represented on the board were, by nature, entitled to a degree of self-interest in that they were expected to defend their constituencies. Of course, the board acted as a collective will for the

industry and so these representatives were also expected to compromise for the good of the livestock industry. As employees, home economists of the board were not expected to defend housewives' choices, but to shape those choices. In the quest to woo consumers into eating more meat, the Meat Board and especially its home economics department attempted to shape consumer thought by manipulating as many channels to the consumer as possible, from schools to women's magazines.

The home economics department of the Meat Board sought to convince housewives through many different avenues to increase their meat consumption, even to the point of manufacturing reality. Home economics was a burgeoning field in the nineteen-teens and individual packing companies, the IAMP, and the Meat Board were among the first organizations in the food industry to hire home economists to help promote meat sales. Home economists defended their new position in the livestock industry to producers by explaining that they created "intelligent demand" that would ultimately help producers. Leaders in the livestock industry generally held a low opinion of housewives and viewed home economists as necessary for instilling this intelligent demand. The Meat Board home economics department cut these channels, as Willson called them, to the consumer by publishing recipe and cookbooks and by directly interjecting meat propaganda into other cookbooks by invitation or by forced entry. The home economics department was also adept at creating a buzz around meat by taking advantage of free publicity in trade journals and through the promotion of cooking schools, which were carefully staged events, in order to maximize meat sales. The home economics department even cooperated with other industries for mutual advantage behind the scenes. The department funded many projects that targeted high school home economics students under the guise of educational material, in order to capture the next generation of housewife and consumer. The Meat Board

members valued Inez Willson, the head of the home economics department, so highly not just because of her ability but mainly because of her influence among other home economists and her contacts among editors of and writers for women's magazines. Even the inventions of the home economics department were designed to benefit the meat industry rather than the consumer. Finally, the home economics department took advantage of the Depression to promote meat.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women and some men wanted greater educational opportunities for girls. Some wanted this education to have an engineering emphasis, others wanted a more social science focus, while still others viewed it as training for domestic duties. The first two groups viewed the burgeoning new field as a way for women to enter male-dominated fields. The last group reflected a conservative view. In the early twentieth century, Midwest land grant schools and the USDA offered the greatest support for home economics. These institutions also viewed home economics conservatively, as a means of teaching domesticity rather than as a way of creating greater professional opportunities for women. Spurred on by the Progressive Era values of efficiency, science, and professionalism, home economists promoted the scientific analysis of all aspects relating to the home, food selection and preparation being one of the major areas of focus. At the same time, laws that provided funding for home economics tied the field more closely to the rural home and domestic training for girls. By 1920, the number of schools offering home economics, both secondary and collegiate, had multiplied. Home economics, however, did not achieve the reforms many of its founders desired but became female enclaves in male-dominated institutions.<sup>467</sup>

Home economists realized that the home was becoming a center of consumption rather than production and many of them viewed the new field as a way to teach women to be discerning consumers. Graduates of home economics programs found work in the public sector as in the

Agricultural Extension Service as well as on the faculty of universities and colleges. These women studied different types of foods and other consumer goods in order to teach other women how to use them as well as identify superior products. They formed the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) based on the ideal of educating the consumer. Members of this group tended to be idealistic and reform-minded.<sup>468</sup>

The first World War served as a watershed for home economics. Food Administrator Herbert Hoover turned to the new discipline to lead the propaganda campaign to convince women to make voluntary sacrifices in food, such as reducing their use of wheat and meat. Women as consumers became accustomed to getting expert advice on food during the war from the home economists within the FA. The government, through the FA, essentially sanctioned what home economists had been promoting: “scientific diet” and the “ideal of rational consumption.” Realizing their ability to shape consumer demand, companies began to hire home economists and create home economics bureaus.<sup>469</sup>

Probably in response to the negative meat publicity churned out by the FA, the meat packers were among the first private institutions to hire home economists. In October 1918, Swift and Company hired Irene Taylor who held a MS in “Domestic Science” as its first home economist. She soon took on the corporate name of “Martha Logan” which became the fictitious liaison between Swift and consumer, and between the consumer and Swift. Every female who worked in the Swift home economics department used the name Martha Logan when giving public demonstrations or lectures.<sup>470</sup> Armour and Wilson both hired home economists around the same time, too. Wilson’s home economist, Eleanor Ahern, left and became the first home economist at Procter and Gamble, even helping to promote the lard substitute Crisco, which Wilson must not have been pleased about.<sup>471</sup>

In 1922, the Institute of American Meat Packers was among the first trade associations to hire a home economist.<sup>472</sup> The Institute of American Meat Packers chose Gudrun Carlson as its first director of home economics. Carlson had earned a BS and an MS from one of the leading schools in home economics, Columbia University. During WWI she taught “special food conservation classes.”<sup>473</sup> She had been teaching at Columbia before leaving to work for the IAMP in 1922. Reflecting the outreach role that the IAMP had in mind for her, she was hired through its public relations bureau.<sup>474</sup>

The home economists who served in business were not accepted at first by the wider world of AHEA. In 1925, as a mark of their growing acceptance, they formed their own group within the AHEA called the Home Economists in Business section. IAMP and meat packer home economists were active in the HEIB. Home economists saw themselves and business leaders also viewed them as liaisons between the company and the consumer. They embodied Hoover’s associative state in the way that they aimed to improve the quality of goods for consumers and uplift business. Herbert Hoover, with his emphasis on cooperation between government and business, supported home economics while as secretary of commerce and as president. The idea was that the business home economist could represent consumer needs to the company and also mold consumer demand. Home economists in business thought that their scientific training elevated them above mere profit making.

Goldstein holds that the business home economists did not see themselves as mere servants of commerce. Instead, while recognizing that these women served corporate interests, she maintains that they also sought to serve the best interest of the consumer. The minutes of the Meat Board generally support the dual aim of home economists in business, but the Meat Board home economists tended to place the concerns of business above that of the consumer as evident in their

negative view of housewives, the deceptions at cooking schools in favor of meat retailing, and their goal of boosting meat publicity rather than improving consumer health.

The packers did not forget the producers in promoting home economics. While the new field was popular among corporations in the 1920s, with many food companies creating their own bureaus, determining its value in dollars and cents remained elusive. Home economists in business received relatively high incomes even though their work could not be directly correlated to sales. Supporters of home economics pointed to the fact that their work was long term—planting seeds that would bear fruit in the years to come. The members of the Meat Board understood the long-term aspect of home economics work.

While large food companies were familiar with home economics, livestock producers probably were not. In 1923, Gudrun Carlson wrote an article for *The Producer*, the official organ for the ANLSA, explaining the value of home economists in the meat and livestock industry. She began with questions that were probably on the minds of stockmen such as “what is home economics? Why should producers and manufacturers be vitally interested in the work carried on for the housewives of the nation? in what way does it affect their interests?” and what will this work “mean to the producer?” Carlson gave a brief history of home economics noting its rapid proliferation in the last decade. She also explained how the home was “becoming principally the chief place of ultimate consumption” and the need to teach housewives how to cook and prepare various dishes of meat so that they will purchase more and different types. If the housewife was not pleased with the meat, Carlson wrote, she would “turn against the product, to the loss of the producer.”<sup>475</sup> She was essentially telling stockmen that they might produce the best meat, but they have no control over who cooks it. Housewives, then, had enormous power over how a family



thought about meat through her skill or lack thereof in its preparation. Packers hoped to convince producers of the importance of home economists in the livestock industry.

Carlson cast herself as a mediator who was looking out for both producer and consumer, but seemingly serving the industry interest more. She explained to the producers that she was interested in how the interests of the “man who produces” and the “housewife who buys and consumes the food” might be “harmonized.” She went on to explain the many different ways in which she was developing “a feeling on the part of the housewife toward the meat industry which is fair and unbiased.” Here she probably had in mind the negative publicity from the recent war on the packers even back to Upton Sinclair’s description of the deplorable conditions of the packing houses in *The Jungle*. Finally, she explained that a greater knowledge of meat would cause the housewife to buy a “better grade of meat” which would provide nutrition for her family and would serve as a “stimulus to better production of meat.” She called this “intelligent demand.”<sup>476</sup> Housewives would benefit perhaps from better nutrition through increased meat consumption, but she was also boosting the consumption of better grades of meat. It is hard to imagine that there was much of a nutritional difference between grades.

The leaders in the livestock industry most likely welcomed the home economist’s push for “intelligent demand” because they tended to view the average consumer as ignorant on all things meat. The Meat Board would not have invested so much effort in creating recipe books, books on the principles of meat identification, cutting, and cooking, or just, in general, all of the propaganda targeting housewives if it did not think that they lacked knowledge in these areas. One example of this low opinion of housewives came from Meat Board member and president of the Iowa Farm Bureau, Charles Hearst. In explaining to the board the value of meat exhibits for educating the consumer, he said that women were easily swayed by advertisements, fooled into using meat

substitutes, and that “many of our housewives . . . don’t know what cuts they want.”<sup>477</sup> Inez Willson, in off the record conversations with Meat Board members, confirmed the ubiquity of this low opinion of the housewife among livestock industry leaders. Willson also agreed with them, saying that women cook other things to definite standards, but meat, she said, they cook “by guess.” She assured the board that she was “trying to overcome that belief” and that the purpose of a new beef cookbook created by her department was to give housewives general principles in a simple way.<sup>478</sup>

The men of the Meat Board also seemed to view women as overly concerned with body image, especially the new fad of slimness. Body type ideals underwent a radical shift in the early twentieth century. Prior to the First World War, Americans held bigness in high esteem. For a man, a large belly was a mark of worldly success and for a woman, a full figure was the ideal of femininity. American respect for bigness shifted after WWI to more of a slender ideal. Young single women as well as middle-class wives tried to conform to the new skinny ideal. Men also felt pressure to conform to a more athletic or even skinny type. The popularity of slimness also increased the popularity of light breakfasts and lunches—with little meat—and a larger dinner. Leaders in the livestock industry were doubly concerned that Americans were eating less and consumed less meat when they did eat.<sup>479</sup>

Perhaps the most outlandish opinion on the desire for skinniness came from cattleman and Meat Board member O. M. Plummer who wanted to fatten women. At the American National Live Stock Association’s annual meeting in 1929, Plummer proposed that stockmen’s wives play a greater role in the campaign to promote meat. He seemed to think it almost rebellious that stockmen’s wives would follow the trend of slenderness. He suggested the formation of an “auxiliary . . . composed of the wives of the livestock people” that could make bigness fashionable

again. He told his fellow stockmen that the women of this group “are going to widen out—be ample, liberal, and grow up the way we like our wives after they get to be forty, fifty, sixty, or maybe eighty years old.”<sup>480</sup> Plummer ironically, spoke of his and other cattlemen’s wives as he might speak of livestock—of how to get them to put on weight. Indeed, the food chain would have gone full circle for Plummer: fattening his cattle on grass then to a feeder for corn, through the myriad of middlemen, and back to his wife to fatten her on beef. Surely stockmen’s wives were not amused with Plummer’s suggestion.

Plummer was not alone in his desire to make fat fashionable. Herman Roe, a major ally of the Meat Board, and field director of the National Editorial Association, told the board about a tongue in cheek editorial that he ran in his newspaper that hit on the same note, titled, “Wanted: Fat Folks.” He explained that people of the Midwest started a “crusade to make fat folks fashionable.” The article claimed that “the problem of farm relief will be solved if Americans can be persuaded to eat more food” and it affirmed that the editor of *Farm and Fireside* agreed writing that “curves will solve the farm surplus problem. These flat chested, skinny hiped, hide and bone women are the real menace to agriculture.” The editorial took special aim at women claiming that “the present fashion for slender females is not based on human nature” and that “no woman wants to diet.” Roe recognized that “this kind of propaganda isn’t very popular with the women.”<sup>481</sup> Many in the meat industry held a dismissive attitude toward housewives but they still relied on home economists to change consumer habits.

As Inez Willson said, the Meat Board reached housewives through many “channels.” One of those channels was through cookbooks. Beginning around 1924, the Meat Board began publication of the *Meat Recipe Book*, which, in addition to recipes, featured “suggestions for health and balanced menus” and “a special section for large quantity meat recipes.” Inez Willson and the

home economics department prepared the recipes and other information, which was published by the department of publicity and publication. The Meat Board sold them, at “livestock shows, at meetings of women’s clubs, and sale through retailers and packers.” Even livestock associations “made use of quite a large number” of the cookbooks, according to the Meat Board. When institutions purchased the books, the board would put a special imprint at no extra cost on the front such as “compliments of or season’s greetings from.” R. B. Davis told the Meat Board that “we have found the housewives very receptive to this material” throughout the country, but especially at the International Live Stock Show. Davis said that women came to the Meat Board booth in search of the latest recipe book. The sales numbers bear out his claim. By early December 1929, the Meat Board had sold 190,000 copies of the sixth annual Meat Recipe book.<sup>482</sup> The distribution of these cookbooks at livestock shows and livestock association meetings was another way the Meat Board promoted good will among producers.

These Meat Board cookbooks featured meat-heavy menus of mostly American fare, but occasionally and pathetically offering seemingly foreign recipes. For instance, in the meat recipe book for 1926, there were recipes with French names, Mexican dishes, and one “Oriental Stew.” The ingredients for the oriental stew were lamb, butter, salt, pepper, onion, potatoes, peas, and rice. Apparently, the only ingredient necessary to turn any dish into Asian fare was rice. The “Mexican round steak” was “Mexican” presumably because the recipe called for one green pepper.

In addition to publishing its own cookbooks, the Meat Board home economics department worked to improve meat’s prominence in other cookbooks. One example of this was in the *Boston Cooking School Cook Book*, which was one of the most popular cookbooks in the US in the early twentieth century. According to the Meat Board, its editors asked the home economics department “to revise the meat chapter.” Willson and her department devoted an entire week to this

undertaking. She found that the chapter on meat contained many errors concerning the “digestibility” and the “food value” of meat. Willson gladly revised the chapter explaining to the board that it was the best way to get the “true facts” before the public because “a cook book is the housewife’s textbook.”<sup>483</sup> The 1930 edition of the *Boston Cookbook* bears the distinct imprint of the Meat Board when compared to the 1928 edition. In the 1928 edition, the chapter on beef begins with definitions: of beef and its various parts such as albumen, gelatin, and fat. These definitions were omitted from the 1930 edition, presumably by Willson. Instead, Willson put the care of meat front and center and added a discussion on larding, including how to use the larding needle, and on the meat thermometer, explaining that it aided in “determining when meat is done.” Willson was clearly concerned with enabling housewives to maintain meat’s flavor after purchase. She was concerned with perception as well because she got rid of terms like “expensive cuts” and “cheapest cuts” and replaced them with terms such as “tender” and “less tender.” Finally, Willson promoted grain finished cattle over grass fed. The 1928 edition stated that “fat should be firm and of a yellowish color,” which is characteristic of grass-fed beef, whereas the 1930 edition said that fat should be “creamy white in color, the whiter the better,” which is characteristic of grain finished beef.<sup>484</sup> The definition of ideal fat as white reflected the new cattle grading standards as well. The 1928 edition included a lot of classifications such as definitions, composition of meats, types of meats, but all of the classification stuff was gone or greatly reduced in the 1930 edition. Kroger Foods also approached the home economics department for help in preparing its forty-eight-page meat booklet publication. Not only did the home economics department assist in putting it together, but the book was “compiled entirely from several of the board’s publications.” The Meat Board also received many other requests to help prepare recipe books, textbooks, articles, and many other

publications.<sup>485</sup> The Meat Board, then, attempted to change the way that consumers thought about meat.

Not all cookbook editors approached the Meat Board for material on meat, sometimes the board fought for meat's inclusion in other publications. The *How's and Whys of Cooking*, published by two University of Chicago home economics professors, was extremely popular among housewives but according to the Meat Board "contained not one word on meat." In 1932, the board confronted the authors, Evelyn Halliday and Gina Noble, about the oversight and they plead ignorance of meat knowledge. They claimed that they did not know enough about meat cooking to write a chapter on it. The Meat Board's committee on research, led by Thomas E. Wilson, gave Halliday a grant to study meat so that she could include a chapter on it in the next edition.<sup>486</sup>

The home economics department, as well as the publicity department, were adept at using the media for free publicity. For the 1929 *Recipe Book* the "meat trade journals" carried articles on it and even donated full-page ad space for it.<sup>487</sup> Inez Willson also noted that the Cooperative Meat Investigations, discussed in Chapter five, were generating popular and scientific articles on meat by some of those participating, such as Lucy Alexander and Miss Childs [Alice Child] who were providing what Willson called "authentic information" to the "housewife." She told the board that this increased publicity was a "good thing for us."<sup>488</sup> Davis of the Meat Board's publicity department called the press, especially the trade press, the "unofficial mouthpiece of the NLSMB." He supported his claim by stating that just within the last year the Meat Board had 420,000 inches of newspaper column printed—for free. Some of these "special articles on meat" were featured in the ANLSA journal, *The Producer*. Indeed, the Meat Board had become a clearinghouse on all

things related to meat—with advertisers and magazines from all over the country asking it for material on and pictures of meat.<sup>489</sup>

It makes sense that the trade press, the newspapers and magazines of the livestock industry, would offer free publicity to the Meat Board because of its vested interest in promoting meat. Another source of free publicity probably came from the fact that a number of Meat Board members were also newspaper editors in addition to being in the livestock business. However, when it came to non-trade newspapers not owned by stockmen, it appears that the Meat Board used a quid pro quo approach to advertisements. For example, Herman Roe, the field director for the National Editorial Association, told the Meat Board that it could obtain free publicity from local newspapers for its cooking schools if it could offer the local papers a chance to “solicit” paid advertisements from butchers or retailers.<sup>490</sup> In other words, the local newspaper would use the story of the upcoming cooking school to entice retailers to purchase advertising space in its newspaper.

The Meat Board’s home economics department in cooperation with other departments hosted these “cooking schools” in various cities as a way to boost the consumption of meat. The board viewed these schools as a way of gaining free publicity, which is probably how most other companies that sponsored cooking schools viewed them. Extremely popular, by 1929 the home economics department was receiving more requests for cooking schools and demonstrations than it could fulfill. Willson conducted schools in places like Buffalo, New York, in cooperation with the extension service of Cornell University; in Storrs, Connecticut, in conjunction with the extension service of the University of Connecticut; at the invitation of a gas company in Worcester; and a public service company in New Jersey. Commenting on the popularity of cooking schools, Inez Willson said for example that in Lincoln, Illinois, a town of 11,000, they had to turn away

between 200 and 300 people. According to Willson, “pretty nearly the whole town was there,” and as Willson tried to make her way through the crowd outside, she felt as if she were “pushing in.” Willson even began to conduct a second meat cutting show because the demand was so great.<sup>491</sup>

The cooking schools were also carefully crafted and geared to capitalize as much as possible on the interest in meat that they generated. The night prior to a cooking school, the Meat Board would hold a special show for local retailers in which the very same women giving the cooking school would familiarize the retailers with the cuts that they would talk about the following day. As Max Cullen of the meat merchandising department explained, if Miss Chambers or Miss Kingsley will talk about a “French rib of beef, a crown roast of pork, and a cushioned shoulder of lamb” at the cooking school, the retailer can have these ready to display in his shop in anticipation of the new demand. In fact, Miss Chambers and Miss Kingsley told the retailers how they “can cash in on the cooking school.” Even the questions at the end were made to order. Cullen told the members of the Meat Board that you may have attended cooking schools before and thought that the questions emanating from the crowd were quite intelligent. They should be, he said, because they were written by “Miss Willson, Mr. Pollock, and Miss Boller,” who were all Meat Board experts.<sup>492</sup>

The Meat Board was eager to cooperate with other industries for mutual advantage. Many public utility companies had their own home economics departments that performed similar activities to the Meat Board. Home economists at utility companies like Insull held public lectures and demonstrations and carried on vast advertising campaigns to promote the use of gas or electric in the home. Inez Willson explained that “power and light companies around the country are one of the best points of contact for the home economics department because they have organized groups of housewives that meet regularly” and who take interest in “outside things.”<sup>493</sup>



In the early 1930s, the Meat Board struck an agreement in a haphazard way with another trade association, the Sugar Institute. In December 1927 the fourteen major sugar refiners in the US formed the Sugar Institute, a trade association that acted as a cartel to boost sugar consumption. According to R. C. Pollock, the Sugar Institute engaged in a far-reaching and intense advertising campaign that simultaneously boosted meat. The Institute also taught consumers “how to use sugar in cooking meats.” In 1931, a man from an advertising agency visited Pollock in his office and spent an hour and a half telling him about how the Sugar Institute was promoting meat along with sugar. Finally, the man said, “what are you doing to boost sugar with your meat?” Pollock did not know but called in Inez Willson who brought out a publication on pork and turned to a picture and said, “here is a ham that has a quarter inch of sugar all over it.” She was pleased that it would appear that “we were playing with these people, too.” The man then said that “we want to work with you and we want you to work for us.” Pollock later affirmed to the Meat Board that “we are going to play with them.” The Meat Board members were in general agreement that they should work with the Sugar Institute.<sup>494</sup>

The Meat Board was also impressed with the Sugar Institute’s “extremely high class” advertising program. The Institute was putting hundreds of thousands of dollars into its campaign and many of its ads featured meat in addition to sugar. The Meat Board recognized that it benefitted immensely from the free advertising and was eager to return the favor by promoting sugar in its own publications.<sup>495</sup> The Meat Board had stumbled into a *quid pro quo* arrangement with the Sugar Institute.

The home economics department also carried on a vigorous apostolate to high school girls by sponsoring competitions and in their publications. The Meat Board reached high school home economics students through classroom posters, a meat textbook, a monthly newsletter, and an

annual meat story contest. The Meat Board placed a high value on teaching the benefits of meat to the next generation in the hope that those girls would become disciples of meat when they grew up.

The home economics department sent publications to high schools across the country to keep meat on people's minds. The department created poster size and notebook size food value charts showing the place that meat should have in the diet and showing how meat compared to other foods regarding protein, calories, vitamins, and minerals. Not surprisingly, various meats held the top spots on the charts except for in the category of calcium, but the department was quick to explain to the Meat Board that they included calcium in order to "enhance the value of these charts"—to make it seem unbiased. These charts were reviewed by the nutrition departments of Iowa State University and the University of Nebraska and also carried the AMA seal of approval. As of 1932, the charts would be displayed in 9,000 high school home economics classes. One home economics committee member was pleased that these charts gave "meat a square deal."<sup>496</sup>

In addition to boosting the food value of meat, the home economics department also sent curricular material to schools. In the mid-1920s, the board was concerned that meat was not receiving the same coverage in high school home economics classes as other foods and the board wanted "a great deal more justice" for meat in the curriculum. According to a survey of high school home economics instructors conducted by the board, a consolidated book on meat would be in high demand. The home economics department set to work compiling a textbook called *Ten Lessons on Meat* that, upon publication, was in high demand according to the board. The *Ten Lessons* proceeded from the "physical structure and chemical composition" to the "nutritive value" to hints on "feeding the family for health." It also carried four chapters on cooking meat. Willson claimed that whenever she visited a high school when on tour, she almost always found that the

home economics department there used the Meat Board's textbook.<sup>497</sup> Indeed, Willson's observation was borne out by the home economics committee report of 1932 that stated that the textbook was in 3,500 high schools around the country. The first edition was distributed free of charge, but by 1932 the hundred-page book was being sold for the cost of production. The home economics department also prepared a four-page monthly publication for high school home economics classes called "Food and Nutrition News."<sup>498</sup>

The home economics department also used competition to promote meat consciousness among high school girls through the Meat Story Contest. The Meat Board initiated the contest in 1924 and it was open only to high school girls in home economics courses. The 1925 contest explained that due to the "striking lack of knowledge of this food among the women of today . . . spurred the board on to engage in a new effort toward better equipping the girls of high school age who will, in a few years, rule the American home." The girls had to write a story or essay on meat between 1,000 and 1,500 words and submit three meat recipes that they had prepared for their family or in their home economics class. Winners were chosen for each of the four districts of the US and one national champion was chosen from among the district winners. Judges were home economics experts and were chaired by Louise Stanley, head of the bureau of home economics of the USDA. By the late 1920s, in addition to cash prizes, the board also offered university scholarships that had to be used toward home economics studies. The contests were popular and regularly attracted over 10,000 entries per year. These contests also were a way to get packer propaganda into the hands of high school girls. In the list of sources of information in the pamphlets, the meat packers were listed three different times.<sup>499</sup>

The Meat Board channeled a lot of resources into the next generation. It was eager to ensure meat's place in the diet of the future. The Meat Board was laying the foundation through its educational campaign.

Many women served in home economics departments in the private sector, especially in the food industry in the interwar period. But unlike their counterparts in the public sector, they were profit oriented. Under Inez Willson, the home economics department of the Meat Board balanced the good of the industry and the good of housewives with the scale tipping in the direction of the livestock industry.

Willson proved her value to the board in her years with the home economics department. In the summer of 1931, General Manager R. C. Pollock tried to convince the Meat Board to give Willson a raise from her current salary of \$4,500 to \$4,800. He informed them that she had received other job offers and that she could leave the board any time for another job. Aside from her writing ability, Pollock defended Willson's raise by explaining that no one in any other home economics department "has a better entrée to women's magazines of the country"—noting that the *Women's Home Companion* had her write an entire chapter in its recent book and gave her no recognition. He also noted how so many other organizations call on her to edit their cookbooks and literature on meat. He told the board that she was well respected by her peers in the Business Section of the American Home Economics Association, many of whom voted for her for president of that group. For Pollock, Willson was valuable primarily because of her contacts with other women's groups and the respect that she garnered among those groups.<sup>500</sup>

Willson in all respects seemed to be a company woman—doing what was best for the industry more than what was best for the consumer—but in one Meat Board executive meeting she revealed a more idealistic side. In 1931, Lucy Alexander of the bureau of home economics

was presenting the findings of her lab to the Meat Board and mentioned that she had found that basting was not necessary if a piece of meat had “a good covering.” Willson exclaimed that there was one thing “that women at large ought to be thankful for and that is the elimination of this manmade rule of basting. I have always said that I thought basting was created by man; that he thought woman’s place was in the kitchen and that standing with a spoon over a roast of beef was a good way to keep her there. But we have been liberated by the Department of Agriculture.” Willson may have wanted to impress her colleagues in the public sector with her idealism—to show them that the private sector home economists were also concerned with larger issues than just making money.<sup>501</sup>

Willson’s department was responsible for some inventions that helped meat more than women. All home economists interested in meat cookery promoted the use of the meat thermometer, which was distinguished from other thermometers because it required a filling other than mercury due to mercury’s low boiling point. Willson’s home economics department worked with the Taylor Instrument Companies of Rochester, New York, to create a nitrogen filled meat thermometer. Taylor Instrument Companies featured hints and directions for cooking meat on the inside of the box that the thermometer came in. Neither Inez Willson nor the Meat Board received credit on the packaging. The text on the box only said that the thermometer was “approved” by the Meat Board.<sup>502</sup>

The Meat Board sponsored Taylor meat thermometer took much of the guesswork out of meat cooking and, as Lucy Alexander stated about meat thermometers in general, it “makes everybody a cook.” Indeed, the glass thermometer was clasped to an enamel backplate with a list of different types of meats on one side and temperatures on the other. Each type of meat had a line leading from it to a spot on the glass thermometer indicating when the meat was done. The meat

investigations had revealed that lower cooking temperatures could increase the tenderness of cheaper meats and overall that temperature played a great role in the palatability of meat. The meat thermometer allowed housewives to cook meat to the proper temperature every time, ensuring that the good tasting meat would be purchased again. As Charles Carey of the ANLSA said to Alexander, “the husbands are the ones who eat the meat so they should be grateful.” The meat thermometer ensured that all housewives could more easily cook meat in the way that the home economics experts deemed best.<sup>503</sup>

The Meat Board home economics department also developed the meat larder which helped solve two major issues for the board. The meat larder was essentially a big metal needle that a cook would use to take a core sample of fat from a slab of pork and then run the needle through a cheap and lean cut of beef, leaving the core sample within the beef. Max Cullen summarized its dual value by telling the board that it “not only provides a market for the surplus back fat, but it makes these lean cuts of meat much more attractive.” The board hired a steel company to manufacture the needle. The larding needle could help consumers make cheap meats more palatable, but the Meat Board supported it primarily for its ability to increase demand for two types of meat that had not sold well.<sup>504</sup>

Conventional wisdom during the Depression was that people should save money, economize, and make do, which was contrary to the desires of those who produced consumer goods. Between 1929 and 1933, virtually all of the media targeting housewives stressed the need to make do. They would have received this message through women’s magazines, farm newspapers, radio shows, the home economics extension service, and many other sources. Similar to the coping methods advocated by the FA during World War I, women tended gardens, canned foods, and substituted one food for another.<sup>505</sup> The meat industry dreaded the thought of

substitution and the Meat Board home economics department warned against some “nutrition workers” who “cling to the idea that meat must be omitted because it is expensive.”<sup>506</sup> Again, similar to the Food Administration, community and national organizations stressed conservation, but this time, not to help with the war effort, but to weather the storm of the Depression.<sup>507</sup>

The Meat Board approached the Depression with two things in mind—helping consumers and helping the meat industry. In 1933 the Meat Board home economics department responded to the Depression by issuing a booklet called “Meat in the Low Cost Diet.” This became the board’s most popular publication, leading all of its other publications in the number distributed. Ten thousand copies were distributed at the Michigan State Fair alone. The booklet stressed the importance of meat from the “standpoint of proper nutrition,” but also from the “standpoint of the industry, so that meat will not lose the ground gained the last few years as an important item of diet.”<sup>508</sup>

As in its other undertakings, the Meat Board received assistance from many other agencies in promoting meat during the Depression. A number of groups helped distribute “Meat in the Low Cost Diet” including the “American Dietitians Association, the American Home Economics Association, and the Pennsylvania Visiting Nurses Association.” In addition to groups distributing the booklet, many others were using it, including chapters of the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, university extension workers, public utilities home service departments, and emergency relief organizations. The board planned to distribute thousands more during the coming winter with the help of other “welfare workers.”<sup>509</sup>

In the early days of Franklin Roosevelt’s administration, the Meat Board became more combative in defending meat’s place in the American diet. A major livestock raiser named Hildebrand told his fellow board members that they should not “soft pedal” their responses to what

he referred to as anti-meat propaganda. In the past, anti-meat propaganda involved a clear attack on meat, but Hildebrand's main targets were Eleanor Roosevelt's White House menu because it only featured liver once a week and probably "cat meat" once a week and Francis Perkins for allotting only ten percent of the consumer dollar for meat in a government publication. The board responded swiftly, as Hildebrand recommended. General Manager Pollock wrote a critical letter to Mrs. Roosevelt who wrote back that she had no intention of hurting the livestock industry. Hildebrand spoke about Secretary of Labor Perkins in a demeaning way, telling his fellow board members that "I addressed a letter to this lady and called attention to the fact that apparently every new official who went down to Washington seemed called upon to talk on some subject they didn't know anything about." He proceeded to inform Perkins of the recipes being put out by the Meat Board and suggested that she use these. He told the Meat Board that "we should be just a little hard boiled about" pushing the fact that people can still afford meat during the Depression.<sup>510</sup>

The Meat Board used similar tactics as the packers did in the nineteen-teens when they combatted the bad publicity. They wrote letters to the individuals who were outspoken critics. Hildebrand encouraged his fellow members to defend meat. He said it was their "duty," when given an "article that would affect the live stock interests, to take it up directly with that party as an individual."<sup>511</sup>

Consumers were the final stop on the journey of meat from the ranch to the table. The Meat Board strove mightily to standardize and make more efficient every stop on the journey. With consumers, the Meat Board home economics department tried to develop a greater desire for meat through publications, collaboration with other industries, propaganda in the high schools, and ghost-writing cookbooks, among other things. It was important for the board that meat propaganda



emanated from other sources besides itself. Livestock leaders were content with the work of Willson who cut new channels to the consumer and cut them deeper.

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<sup>466</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1929, 15, Box 290 NLSMB Records; USDA, “Organization Lists of the Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations of the United States,” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913): 65; USDA, “List of Workers in Subjects Pertaining to Agriculture and Home Economics in the U. S. Department of Agriculture and in the State Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations,” (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917): 65; “Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago,” 13 no. 1 (January 1919): 92; *The Badger*, Volume 30, (1916): 179, 515.

<sup>467</sup> Carolyn M. Goldstein, *Creating Consumers: Home Economists in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Sarah Stage and Virginia B. Vincenti, eds., *Rethinking Home Economics: Women and the History of a Profession*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 5–11.

<sup>468</sup> Goldstein, *Creating Consumers*.

<sup>469</sup> Goldstein, *Creating Consumers*, 46–7.

<sup>470</sup> “Home Economics Division,” Box 2 folder 1 “Swift and Co Home Economics, 1918–1960s,” Swift Records; Untitled, Box 2 folder 2 “Swift and Co Home Economics, 1918–1960s,” Swift Records.

<sup>471</sup> Goldstein, *Creating Consumers*, 60, 189.

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- <sup>472</sup> Carolyn M. Goldstein, *Creating Consumers: Home Economists in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 46–9; “Home Economist to Aid Packers,” *National Provisioner*, September 23, 1922.
- <sup>473</sup> “The Institute Plan Work,” *National Provisioner*, November 25, 1922.
- <sup>474</sup> “Home Economist to Aid Packers,” *National Provisioner*, September 23, 1922.
- <sup>475</sup> “Home Economics and the livestock industry,” *The Producer*, September 1923, 10
- <sup>476</sup> “Home Economics and the livestock industry,” *The Producer*, September 1923, 10
- <sup>477</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, 57–9, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>478</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1929, 41, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>479</sup> Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 163–7.
- <sup>480</sup> ANLSA Convention, 1929, 34.
- <sup>481</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1930, 47–8, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>482</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1929, 55–7, Box 290, NLSMB Records; Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, 137, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>483</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1929, 41–2, Box 290, NLSMB Records;
- <sup>484</sup> Fannie Merritt Farmer, *The Boston Cooking School Cook Book* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1928), 229–33; Fannie Merritt Farmer, *The Boston Cooking School Cook Book* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1930), 238–40.
- <sup>485</sup> Meat Board, Semi Annual Report July-December 1932, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>486</sup> Meat Board, Semi Annual Report July-December 1932, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>487</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1929, 56–7, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

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- <sup>488</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, 128–9, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>489</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, 133–4, 138, 139, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>490</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1930, 46 Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>491</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1929, 36, 39, 40, Box 290, NLSMB Records
- <sup>492</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, 2, 8, 10 Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>493</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1929, 37 Box 290, NLSMB Records; Goldstein, *Creating Consumers*.
- <sup>494</sup> David Genesove and Wallace P. Mullen, “Rules, Communication, and Collusion: Narrative Evidence from the Sugar Institute Case” National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper Series, (March 2001), 2; Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, 274–6, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>495</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, 274–6, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>496</sup> Meat Board, Semi Annual Report July-December 1932, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>497</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1930, 134, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>498</sup> Meat Board, Semi Annual Report July-December 1932, Box 290, NLSMB Records; “Report on Second Annual Meat Story Contest,” 1925, Box 289 folder “National Meat Story Contest—2<sup>nd</sup> 1925,” NLSMB Records.
- <sup>499</sup> Pamphlets from Box 289 folder “National Meat Story Contest—2<sup>nd</sup> 1925,” folder “National Meat Story Contest—6<sup>th</sup> 1929,” folder “National Meat Story Contest—9<sup>th</sup> 1932,” NLSMB Records.
- <sup>500</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, 240–3, Box 290, NLSMB Records.
- <sup>501</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, 108, 119–20, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

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<sup>502</sup> Taylor Roast Meat Thermometer, Taylor Instrument Companies, Rochester, New York, 1934.

The box carries a patent number of 1984825.

<sup>503</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1931, 130, Box 290, NLSMB Records; Taylor Roast Meat Thermometer, 1934. Some of the description of the meat thermometer is from the 1934 version of the instrument. I assume that the 1931 version was similar.

<sup>504</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, December 1933, 17, Box 290, NLSMB Records. Meat Board, Semi Annual Report July-December 1932, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>505</sup> Lisa L. Ossian, *The Depression Dilemmas of Rural Iowa, 1929-1933* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2011), 60.

<sup>506</sup> Meat Board, Semi Annual Report July-December 1932, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>507</sup> Ossian, *The Depression Dilemmas*, 60–6.

<sup>508</sup> Meat Board, Semi Annual Report July-December 1932, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>509</sup> Meat Board, Semi Annual Report July-December 1932, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>510</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1933, 126–8, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

<sup>511</sup> Meat Board Executive Minutes, June 1933, 127, Box 290, NLSMB Records.

## Chapter 8 - Conclusion

On a Wednesday morning in early February 1929, honorary vice president of the American National Live Stock Association, Fred Bixby commented on producer and packer relations. Bixby expressed his agreement with F. Edson White, the head of Armour packing, whose twin brother spoke on his behalf at the meeting the day before, that “there was a much better understanding between the producer and the packer” today than in the past. Why is this the case? asked Bixby. Simple. It is because “the packers are paying strict attention to their business, and the producers are paying strict attention to theirs.” As much as Bixby hoped this was true, it was not really the case. Bixby credited himself with initiating the better relations because when he was elected as president of the ANLSA in 1922, he met with the leaders of the big packers, Cudahy, Swift, Wilson, and others at the famed Saddle and Sirloin Club at the Chicago Union Stockyards, and told them “to keep away from our meetings, except when invited.” He then told the packers that producer representatives would stay away from their meetings unless invited.<sup>512</sup> According to Bixby, strict boundaries and distrust were the ingredients of collaboration.

Packers and producers had and still have a love-hate relationship. Sometimes producers talked about packers in the highest expressions of friendship and at other times they expressed loathing and suspicion. So many clichés come to mind when thinking about this relationship—“if you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em;” “can’t live with ‘em, can’t live without ‘em.” These colloquialisms express in a folksy way something timeless about some of the relationships that we as people have with others. In this case, economic circumstances force these two unequal groups to rely on one another for survival. They have mutual interests, but at the same time, they try to take advantage of each other. Because of the structure of the industry, the packers have greater power and more often than not, use it to their advantage at the expense of the producers. So when producers

collaborated with packers, they worked with their enemy for the good of the industry as a whole and hoped to gain from attempts to reform the sectors within the industry downstream from the packers. Producers worked with the packers for their own self-interest.

This study focuses on the very top of the livestock industry. I only examine the leaders in two of the top three livestock organizations in the US; the top executives and officials of the biggest meat packing companies; the national packer trade association; and the national cooperative marketing association. This is not a study about the small producers or the small packers who undoubtedly viewed things differently from the big producers and packers. Their perspectives are hinted at in parts of the dissertation but not fully examined. My purpose was to understand the motives behind those at the top who are frequently criticized for selling out.

This study opens up wider questions about producer and packer interaction. One area for future study would be the state and local livestock associations and see why some of them supported the packers and others opposed them. Also, this study only examines the first decade of the National Live Stock and Meat Board, which functioned into the 1990s. A study of its entire history would undoubtedly reveal much insight into the later changes in the industry.

Several factors pushed producers and packers to collaborate. For the packers, it was not as important because of their market power to cooperate with producers. However, the war on the packers was expensive for them financially and in terms of public perception. Getting the producers to end the war for publicity's sake became a priority. Low meat consumption, the rising trend of slimness, and the manifold institutions calling for reduced meat consumption all lowered the demand for meat and in a way forced cattlemen and packers to work together for mutual survival. Producers also felt like they had won the market safeguards against packer exploitation that they wanted in the consent decree or in the Packers and Stockyards Act. After these economic

safeguards were in place, the big producer's political inclinations aligned with the big packers, Hoover, Coolidge, and Jardine. Producers had become wary of federal involvement in the livestock industry for fear that the government would favor its larger constituency, consumers. Finally, stockmen were happy to help the packers use their power to reform the rest of the livestock industry.

Producers worked with the big packers through the cooperative marketing association, the Meat Board in part to increase efficiency at all levels of the livestock and meat industry. The Board promoted efficiency among stockmen by pushing for more uniform cattle, attempting to get rid of or at least reducing the number of middlemen, by promoting expert knowledge among retailers, and even through educating the consumer on meat knowledge. Leading cattlemen generally supported all of these efforts at efficiency because they hoped they would lead to higher cattle prices by boosting demand or by reducing waste along the supply chain, ultimately fetching them better prices for their cattle.

The Meat Board was extremely influential in the sciences to the point that it served as a central node for meat research. It was where government and university researchers paid obeisance to the kings and queens of the meat world. Money for meat research came from the Meat Board and from individual meat packers, and in a roundabout way, the Meat Board helped open funds for this research by lobbying for the Purnell Act, by spearheading the Quality and Palatability Tests, and generally raising awareness for meat studies. The Meat Board even laid the foundation for the Animal Meat Science Association. This private institution exercised a great degree of influence on the type and direction of public research and funding for that work. Much of this was done indirectly, which explains why the full scope of the Meat Board's work has escaped scholarly study.

The Meat Board and the packers relentlessly propagandized all opposition, real or imagined. It and the packers traced anti-meat propaganda to its sources in journals, cookbooks, universities, government, and the medical association, and sought to change the minds of these creators through science and through meat myths. The Board put science at the service of industry. The meat myths that the industry leaders pushed created a shared history and perhaps a unifying factor for the collaboration between packer and producer. In fact, packer and Meat Board outreach to producers was intense, almost as much as its outreach to consumers. The packers and Meat Board in their attempts to influence scientists, housewives, and producers favored the use of third parties to do the promoting and even tried to control events as seen in the home economics demonstrations throughout the country. Packers and the Meat Board acted, in a sense, as hidden powers.

In typical associationalist fashion, the packers and the Meat Board dealt with opposition by increased contact and personal interaction. This was the case during the war on the packers and was the idea behind the Meat Board. In the attempt to raise donations to the Meat Board, the executives relied on persuasion by attending meetings of the opposition and attempting to sway opinion. Packers used similar tactics in persuading stockmen to oppose the consent decree in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The Meat Board also cooperated with many other industries and associations for mutual product promotion.

The war on the packers could not have ended soon enough for producers. As the war went on, the ANLSA became further divided between pro-packers and anti-packers. Especially after the consent decree, divisions were more intense between stockmen over the question of federal regulation. Both packers and producers were exhausted—they had spent considerable amounts of money prosecuting the war and had lost valuable public opinion during the years of conflict. After



the war, packers and producers worked together to promote meat consumption through the embodiment of collaboration, the Meat Board. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, producers worked with packers for their own self-interest to promote meat and reform the industry, though never fully trusting them.

Today the industry is in a condition reminiscent of 1914. It is hard to imagine the stockmen coming together to fight the big packers and getting a federal hearing. After all the proposed GIPSA rules several years back failed to pass Congress—it is unlikely that anything approaching the war on the packers would happen today. If it did, it would need to involve poultry raisers as well as cattle, hog, and sheep raisers. In 1914, the ANLSA was an organization of all stockmen, today stock raisers are divided by species. Without a central livestock association or a Meat Board, there is no central meeting place for the industry. Today the stockmen of the US have been divided and nearly conquered—if conquered could be taken to mean the “chickenization” of cattle raising.

In the end, it was not the Packers and Stockyards Act as much as the consent decree along with new technologies, decentralization, and use of non-union labor, that broke the market concentration of the big four. The consent decree only affected Armour, Swift, Cudahy, and Wilson. These firms are gone and the new big four are not affected whatsoever—except that they benefitted from—by the consent decree.

The producers who collaborated with the packers did not do so with an eye to destroy competition. The forefathers of the NCBA did not feel altogether comfortable working with the packers, but they worked with them for what they understood was the good of the entire cattle industry. They knew that they were trusting in their enemy. The big packers cultivated good will as much as possible and dictated policy when necessary. The packers occupied the crucial constriction point in the hourglass between producers and consumers. Their concentration was

great, and after securing protection for themselves, cattlemen had no qualms about using the packer's power to change other areas of the industry. Today, much as in the 1920s, producers and packers have a love-hate relationship, where packers, combined with the logic of efficiency, continue the slow capture of the cattle producers of America.

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<sup>512</sup> ANLSA Convention 1929, 62.

## Chapter 9 - Epilogue

The early 1930s were some of the worst years for cattlemen. The Depression worsened, causing somewhere around twenty-five percent of Americans to be out of work. While few Americans starved during this period, many did cut back on meat consumption. In fact, between 1930 and 1934 beef consumption reached a half-century nadir at 51.9 pounds per person per year—capping a general decline since just prior to the First World War. Red meat consumption in general was low, at 134.2 pounds per person annually. In 1933, in addition to decreased meat consumption, severe drought plagued ranchers and feeders alike who tried to sell their cattle on “an already glutted market,” which caused a twenty-five percent drop in prices.<sup>513</sup>

Americans blamed Hoover for the Depression and elected Franklin Roosevelt who quickly put into motion his panicked legislative action known as the First Hundred Days. The federal government offered assistance to nearly every sector of the economy, including cattlemen and consumers. The Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), which passed Congress in March 1933, offered subsidies to farmers and producers who voluntarily reduced production. The subsidy was taken from a tax on processors of all foods, including the big packers. Cattlemen, through their organizations, lobbied for the removal of their product from the list of basic commodities included in the AAA and were therefore not eligible for subsidy payments. As the drought intensified, however, stockmen lobbied for the inclusion of cattle in the AAA, which they received in June 1934 under the Jones-Connally Amendment. Congress also approved of the Drought Cattle Relief Program that same year, under whose auspices it purchased 8.3 million cattle in the US. As an unintended consequence, this purchase helped boost the overall quality of America’s herds because cattlemen sold their scrubbiest cattle to the government—effectively culling their herds. With about ten percent of the animals destroyed nationally, cattle prices nudged upward.<sup>514</sup>

Cattlemen, for the most part, were not pleased that they had to take government assistance. One cattleman connected government aid to slavery, stating that “when an actual cattle-buying program was announced the rattling of chains could be heard in it.” Many of them supported the packers in opposition to the AAA’s required processing tax. This tax was assessed on food processors and was used to pay the farmers for subscribing to the voluntary conservation of their produce. Contrary to what happened during the war on the packers, cattlemen did not look to the government as the protector or arbiter between themselves and the packers. Now many cattlemen grudgingly took government aid as they snickered at government inefficiency and criticized what many of them saw as New Deal socialism. Cattlemen did not display the same level of animosity toward the packers during the Great Depression that they had during the war on the packers. One example is when the packers accepted repayment of the processing tax after the AAA was declared unconstitutional. It was like the packers were paid twice because they had already passed on the tax to consumers. Yet stockmen’s criticism of this act—at least in the KLA—was muted.<sup>515</sup>

In fact, a number of leading producers and packers colluded to oppose the AAA and the New Deal through a conservative front group called the Farmer’s Independence Council of America (FIC). The group was started by two independent agricultural engineers with connections to the largest conservative group of the time, the American Liberty League. These agricultural engineers, Stanley Morse and Kurt Grunwald, cast about among their friends in agriculture to find fellow travelers to work in their group. During the search, they came into contact with big packers like Thomas E. Wilson. The FIC received considerable secret financial backing from the packers, including donations from Swift and Company and Wilson and Company. It also received donations from President of the Union Stockyards in Chicago, A. G. Leonard. Morse described Ed Wentworth, director of Armour’s Livestock Bureau, as an enthusiastic supporter.<sup>516</sup> The FIC

offered another example of the packer's use of the third-party technique, though this time in support of conservatism rather than for the promotion of meat.

Cattlemen jumped on board with the FIC as well. Dan Casement served as president while Chris Abbott, a prominent Nebraska cattleman and ANLSA executive board member, served as his state's leader. Edward N. Wentworth, rallied producers in speeches like the one he gave to the Wyoming Stock Growers convention in June 1935 in which he stated that government intervention was against "American traditions."<sup>517</sup> Many other prominent stockmen supported the organization financially as was the case with S. M. Swenson or morally as with several prominent ANLSA members, including president Charles Collins. Prominent Angus breeder Oakleigh Thorne donated money and joined the FIC as well. The ANLSA did not officially support the FIC, though many, if not most, of its members agreed with its principles.<sup>518</sup>

The IAMP played a major role behind the scenes of the FIC. William W. Woods, president of that group, met with FIC leaders on numerous occasions and tried to shore up financial and other business support for the group. He told Morse that he and "his crowd [did] not want to appear in this or any other activity of the F.I.C."<sup>519</sup> Thus, in many ways, the FIC was a continuation of the collaboration between stockmen and packers that had opposed the government during the war on the packers.

After WWII Americans celebrated ranchers for their individualism and identified the meat industry broadly with conservatism. Chronicler of the meat and livestock industry, Bertram Fowler wrote that the packing industry was "symbolically American" and defended big business—such as the big packers—against communism. He labeled those that criticized cooperation in the meat industry between producers and packers as socialists. American reverence for cowboys and

ranchers as national icons reached new heights in post-war pop culture. Beef and the meat industry were identified as solidly American during the Cold War.<sup>520</sup>

Consumer demand for beef gradually improved beginning in the middle of the Depression. Per capita consumption of meat increased steadily even during WWII when government controls were in place. This growth was fueled in part by the popularity of hamburgers and hot dogs, backyard bar b ques and fast food.<sup>521</sup> Hot dogs, a clever way of packaging leftover pieces of meat from a variety of animals that were cheap to produce, soared in popularity around midcentury.<sup>522</sup> On one level, it is not too surprising that beef eating increased in the post-war prosperity because beef is a higher priced meat and has always been at the top of the hierarchy of meat eating. However, just because Americans have the money to purchase extravagant protein does not mean that they will necessarily do so. It is possible that the massive advertising of the Meat Board and packers during the 1920s and 1930s began to pay dividends in the 1950s with many a former home economics student turned mother and consumer applying her meat education.

Processing and packing changed dramatically after WWII with storied institutions replaced by new methods and companies. Stockyards through the West and Midwest had served as meeting places between packers and producers in addition to their primary role of central markets. These arrangements were ephemeral, dependent on the rail lines connecting them with faraway cities. The largest and most important of these, the Chicago Union Stockyards, served as national headquarters for the big four packers and was the location of the largest and most prestigious livestock show. Improved roads increased producer reliance on truck transportation and many began to invest in feedlots. Trucks and feedlots decentralized the industry with packers moving operations closer to feedlots.<sup>523</sup> The feedlot changed the relationship between stockman and packer to a degree because it brought the packer to the place of production. The stockmen operators of

feedlots were well informed about cattle prices, unlike the many sellers at the stockyard who were uninformed and at the mercy of packers as price takers. Feedlots gave cattlemen a competitive advantage because they did not have to sell their cattle on any given day or even week.<sup>524</sup> The industry decentralized, and stockyards across the country closed forever—with the Union Stockyards closing in the 1970s.

Hampered in part by the consent decree, Armour, Swift, Wilson, and Cudahy continued to lose market share to smaller, but growing, regional packers. By the 1950s, the big four controlled less than thirty-two percent of market share. They had lost business to aggressive up and coming packers as well as to grocery store chains like A&P and Kroger who were vertically integrating and maintaining their own processing facilities. The big packers tried one more time in the 1950s to modify the consent decree, this time to enter retail, but to no avail. Gradually other factors combined to further edge out the big four. Innovations allowed up and coming companies to increase their efficiency. For example, IBP invented boxed beef, which is where the meat processor carves the carcass into almost retail ready pieces and fits them into a box. This invention was a game changer and allowed the processor to ship much more meat per truck than those still shipping full carcasses, taking away market share from the old big four in the 1960s.<sup>525</sup> The new packers also took advantage of non-union workers, many of them Hispanic immigrants, who they paid substantially less than union meat packers.<sup>526</sup> The period between WWII and the 1980s was probably the most competitive between packers since the mid-nineteenth century.

The packing industry has grown in scope since the decline of the old big four. The IAMP changed its name around 1940 to the American Meat Institute, then in 2015 merged with another major packing trade association to become the North American Meat Institute. This change reflected the growing importance of Mexico and Canada within the group.<sup>527</sup> After the enactment

of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), US meat processors dramatically increased their Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Mexico. FDI packing plants in Mexico have also increased Mexican migration to the rural packing plants in the Great Plains.<sup>528</sup> Due to what some have called merger mania in the 1980s and 1990s, the beef industry once again found itself concentrated inside four major meat packers. This time Tyson, Cargill, National Beef, and JBS Swift gained control of the industry; but to a greater degree than Armour, Swift, Wilson, and Morris had. Today (2019) they control eighty-five percent of the US market share and deliberately divide territory among themselves, just as the previous big four did.<sup>529</sup> The market power of the present big packing companies is now larger than the old big four controlled on the eve of the war on the packers.

These big operators support the Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO's) that have grown by leaps and bounds in the past several decades. Processors moved closer to feedlots and CAFO's and away from stockyards, leading to the closing of stockyards across the country in the 1960s and 1970s. In pursuit of efficiency, stockmen and feedlot owners used growth hormones to fatten cattle as quickly as possible while staving off diseases brought on by the unnatural weight gain and diet through the use of antibiotics. In effect, they pursued the same goal—smaller cattle marketed at younger ages—that the packers desired in the 1920s. This trend has only continued. Today cattle put on weight so quickly in the feedlot that they can be marketed at fourteen months old. In response to retail demand, the feedlot allows for the creation of a more uniform product.

National consolidation was evident even among producers and contributed to the breakup of the Meat Board. The American National Live Stock Association narrowed its focus in the 1950s to cattle only and changed its name to the American National Cattlemen's Association and opposed government price supports for beef and cattle. In the 1970s, it changed its name simply to the



National Cattlemen's Association in an effort for more public outreach.<sup>530</sup> Shortly after this, in the 1980s, the Meat Board fragmented into species-specific groups, with the beef group operated by the Cattlemen's Beef Board. This Beef Board consists only of domestic producers and importers of cattle and is run by the National Cattlemen's Association. The Beef Board now collects one dollar on every head of cattle sold in the US through the Beef Checkoff program which funds promotion and research.<sup>531</sup> The modern Beef Checkoff was created by an Act of Congress as part of the 1985 Farm Bill which authorized the USDA to develop the program. Rather than the government acting as a servant of the Meat Board, as it did in the 1920s and 1930s, the USDA now unquestionably oversees the Beef Checkoff program.<sup>532</sup> The contributions to the Beef Board through the Beef Checkoff are mandatory and all cattlemen, large and small must pay.

Stockmen have felt the cost price squeeze of the decline in beef consumption and the concentration of power in the livestock industry. Some cattlemen opened feedlots while others have chosen to stay on the farm. With increasing concentration among packers in the 1980s, competition at the feedlot died down and feedlots no longer provided the same competitive advantage for stockmen that they had in previous decades.<sup>533</sup> Rather than having twenty different buyers come to the feedlot on a regular basis, feedlots are increasingly dependent on one buyer from a major packing firm. The large packers now offer advance contracts to feedlot owners, many of whom gladly accept. The feedlot owner then has a guaranteed buyer for his or her cattle and does not have to fret over the packer buyer showing up or not. With so many advanced contracts lined up, packers are less reliant on the cash market and consequently pay less for cattle to producers still selling on the open market. It is this growing lack of competition that many cattlemen outside of the big organizations like NCBA and the Kansas Livestock Association are fighting. They fear that the cattle industry will become like the poultry industry—where packers

own the chicken and pass the risk of raising them on to producers. They would be at the complete mercy of the large packers.<sup>534</sup>

Many owners of feedlots and ranches have found it necessary to sign contracts with the large packers for economic security. Still, a contract is no guarantee of survival. Between 1996 and 2013, roughly 11,000 ranchers per year were unable to afford their operations anymore and were forced to quit. With increasing concentration among packers in the 1980s, competition at the feedlot died down and feedlots no longer provided the same competitive advantage for stockmen that they had in previous decades.<sup>535</sup> As a consequence, 30,000 small feedlots went under from about 1996 to 2011.<sup>536</sup>

The big packers increasingly purchased from the large operators, driving many smaller operations out of business. Smaller operators have banded together in different organizations such as Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund (R-CALF) and the Organization for Competitive Markets (OCM) to pressure the government to act against the large packers. These cattlemen tended to support the Obama administration in its efforts to strengthen the Grain, Inspection, and Packers and Stockyards Act (GIPSA). The Obama era changes would have denied packers the right to pay premiums to large operations versus small, would have forced packers to publish the going price for cattle and would have made it easier for ranchers to sue for anti-competitive practices against packers. Similar to the rhetoric of the old big five packers during the war on the packers, modern packers and the big producers claimed that this would ruin their efficiency and launched a massive propaganda campaign against the rule changes. R-CALF has drawn the ire of the NCBA who has criticized them for working with radicals. In the WWI era war on the packers, producers were split over packer regulation.<sup>537</sup> One hundred years later, they have split again over the same issues.

Small producers also tend to oppose the Beef Checkoff. Mike Callicrate, a rancher in Kansas, opposes the mandatory payment as something akin to taxation without representation. These small producers claim that the Beef Checkoff and the NCBA have used those funds to make it easier for cheap imported beef, such as from South America, to enter the US through reduced trade barriers, and harder for consumers to distinguish between domestic and foreign beef by sponsoring the repeal of Country of Origin Labelling. Small producers see the modern manifestation of the Meat Board and the ANLSA, that is, the NCBA, as working for the benefit of the big packers rather than for the small producers of the US.<sup>538</sup>

Large stockmen today tend to side with conservative causes and oppose more government regulation even more blatantly than in the 1930s. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association articles have a conservative tilt to them combined with self-interest as evident in their opposition to the Obama era proposed GIPSA regulations. It also tends to support the big packers. A promotional quote from a Nebraska rancher on its website sums up this sentiment, "as individuals, we have limited resources . . . to aid in keeping the 'wolves' such as government, environmental and radical groups, off of our door steps. NCBA is there every day protecting our industry." These "wolves" are closely associated with left-wing causes.<sup>539</sup>

New methods of cattle raising have brought on these new criticisms of the beef industry, mainly of large-scale operations. In the 1920s and 1930s, cattlemen and packers fought vegetarians, fad diets, and the medical community. Today, vegetarians have become a foe again for cattlemen. The medical community is one of the opponents of cattlemen today as well, whenever it acts on research that puts beef in a bad light. Fad diets are still around, but some—like the paleo diet, that calls for increased meat consumption—may help the cause of meat. Many of these critics find fault with modern mechanisms for weight gain such as the use of hormones, of

genetic modification, and antibiotics. They also find fault with the public health hazards of CAFO's such as poor air quality, water contamination, and the increased susceptibility to pathogenic bacteria.<sup>540</sup>

Cattlemen seem most concerned with animal rights activists and environmentalists, who are a new presence among the critics of meat. Many western cattlemen were concerned about the environment in the early twentieth century due to overgrazing and the destruction of rangeland. In a sense, they were the environmentalists and their concern was the future productivity of the land. Today, "environmentalists"—however cattlemen define it—are largely outside of the industry. They are concerned especially with the effects of cattle emissions on climate change and with the spread of cattle raising globally, with deforestation to make way for grazing areas. Linking cattle raising to climate change dates back to a report on the topic issued by the UN in 2006. This report "blamed meat for eighteen percent of greenhouse gas emissions" according to beef defender Nicolette Hahn Niman.<sup>541</sup> Animal Rights activists are mainly concerned with the treatment of cattle in the CAFO's. Recalling the rhetoric of the 1920s, the Chief Executive Officer for the NCBA recently called R-CALF "a puppet in the war being waged by animal rights activists and the vegetarians seeking to drive beef producers out of business."<sup>542</sup>

Still a minority of cattle raisers opt out of CAFO's and feedlots and raise free-range cattle. They see this as more environmentally friendly and more in keeping with the traditions of the ranching industry. Some studies suggest that grass-fed and free-ranging cattle produce higher quality meat in terms of nutrition. Ironically, cattlemen who promote grass-fed, free ranging beef have come full circle. The industry leaders in the 1920s and 1930s referred to this as inferior meat, incapable of receiving the top grades.<sup>543</sup> The CAFO model has inspired many within and without

the industry to seek alternative ways of raising beef cattle. One such alternative being proposed is lab-grown beef, which probably small and large producers are opposed to.

Perhaps the larger issue revolves around the effect of culture and ideology on the land and its people. Several scholars have pointed out the adverse effects to ecosystems of short-sighted development for immediate profit. Scientific and industrial agriculture has transformed the landscape, especially in the Great Plains, into a more simplified and fragile ecosystem. This is largely the result of a “market culture,” which views nature as so many potential commodities to be used in the name of progress. The cattle industry historically has been one of the driving forces of this change.<sup>544</sup>

The relationship between producers and packers is at a lower point now than in the 1920s and 1930s. Many small operators resent the control that the largest packers exercise but also recognize their reliance on them. Large operations and organizations are more sympathetic to the new order of things. However, there is no denying that the logic of efficiency has caused greater concentration in the meat and livestock industry, driving out ranchers, feeders, small feedlots, and small packers. The foundations laid by the big producers and big packers in the 1920s and early 1930s helped to reshape the cattle industry.

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<sup>513</sup> Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 140; Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 90.

<sup>514</sup> Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 141–5; Wood, *Kansas Beef Industry*, 197; Schlebecker, *Cattle Raising on the Plains*, 145.

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- <sup>515</sup> Quote from Schlebecker, *Cattle Raising on the Plains*, 141; Skaggs, *Prime Cut*, 142; W. H. Burke, “Annual Address,” *Kansas Stockman*, April 1, 1936; Daniel T. Gresham, “‘Today Mr. Packer is hailed as the Holiest of Holies’: Memory and the Meat Packer’s Capture of the Kansas Livestock Association in the Interwar Period,” Missouri Valley History Conference, Omaha, Nebraska, March 2017.
- <sup>516</sup> Daniel T. Gresham, “‘A Genuine Farmers’ Organization:’ The Farmers’ Independence Council as a False Front.” Agricultural History Society, Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 2017.
- <sup>517</sup> Edward N. Wentworth, “The AAA Amendments, the Packer, and the Producer,” June 18–19, 1935, Box 8, folder 20, Casement Papers.
- <sup>518</sup> Choate, *Disputed Ground*; Daniel T. Gresham, “The Political Journey of Dan Casement;” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 39 (Summer 2016): 94–113; Gresham, “‘A Genuine Farmers’ Organization.’”
- <sup>519</sup> Stanley Morse to Dan Casement, July 10, 1935, Box 8 folder 22, Casement Papers.
- <sup>520</sup> Charles A. Burmeister, “Six Decades of Rugged Individualism: The American National Cattlemen's Association, 1898–1955,” *Agricultural History* 30 no. 4 (October 1956): 143–150; Fowler, *Meat, Men*, 240, 245.
- <sup>521</sup> Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 90.
- <sup>522</sup> Horowitz, *Putting Meat*, 76.
- <sup>523</sup> Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America’s Wal-Mart Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).
- <sup>524</sup> Williams and Stout, *Economics of the Livestock-Meat Industry*, 310.

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<sup>525</sup> Personal communication with Rosemary Mucklow, Director Emeritus of the North American Meat Institute.

<sup>526</sup> Matthew R. Sanderson, “Free Trade, Food-Processing, and Migration: An Analysis of Mexican Immigration in the U.S. Great Plains Region,” *Social Science Journal* 51 (2014): 474–482.

<sup>527</sup> “History,” North American Meat Institute, <https://www.meatinstitute.org>

<sup>528</sup> Sanderson, “Free Trade,” 476. Sanderson notes that processing facilities in Mexico are the virtually the same as those in the rural Great Plains and so laborers at facilities in Mexico have skills that they can translate to the facilities in the US. Sanderson refers to this as “occupational channeling.”

<sup>529</sup> Christopher Leonard, *The Meat Racket: The Secret Takeover of America’s Food Business* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), 208.

<sup>530</sup> Immanuel Ness, *Encyclopedia of Interest Groups and Lobbyists in the United States* (London: Routledge, 2000), 231–2.

<sup>531</sup> “About Cattlemen’s Beef Board,” <https://www.beefboard.org/about/whoweare.asp>

<sup>532</sup> “Beef Act and Order,” <https://www.beefboard.org/about/whoweare.asp>

<sup>533</sup> Stephanie Paige Ogburn, “Cattlemen struggle against giant meatpackers and economic squeezes,” *High Country News*, March 21, 2011.

<sup>534</sup> Ogburn, “Cattlemen struggle.”

<sup>535</sup> Ogburn, “Cattlemen struggle.”

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<sup>537</sup> Ogburn, “Cattlemen struggle.”; “Activists Allowed to Expand Attacks on Beef Checkoff,” NCBA website, November 6, 2018.

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<sup>538</sup> Mike Callicrate, “MO Bad News: NCBA, cattlemen’s worst nightmare, wants \$1 increase in Beef Tax,” February 25, 2016, Organization for Competitive Markets website, <https://competitivemarkets.com>

<sup>539</sup> Brian Maffly, “Independent ranchers fight corporate control: Lawsuits seek to eliminate mandatory checkoff payments,” *High Country News*, Sept. 30, 2002; NCBA on Supreme Court Pick Kavanaugh: "Opportunity to Solidify" Court, "Clears Path for Narrower WOTUS Definition" July 9, 2018, <http://www.beefusa.org/>; A Nebraska Rancher, NCBA website, promo for NCBA.

<sup>540</sup> Anthony Winson, *The Industrial Diet: The Degradation of Food and the Struggle for Healthy Eating* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 149.

<sup>541</sup> Nicolette Hahn Niman, *Defending Beef: The Case for Sustainable Meat Production* (White River Junction, Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2014), 10.

<sup>542</sup> Ogburn, “Activists Allowed to Expand Attacks.”

<sup>543</sup> Niman, *Defending Beef*; Winson, *The Industrial Diet*; Leonard, *The Meat Racket*.

<sup>544</sup> Sherow, *The Grasslands of the United States*, 82; Lynn-Sherow, *Red Earth*; Matthew Sanderson R. Scott Frey, “Structural Impediments to Groundwater Sustainability in the High Plains Aquifer of Western Kansas,” *Agriculture and Human Values* 32 no. 3 (2015): 401–417; David D. Vail, *Chemical Lands: Pesticides, Aerial Spraying, and Health in North America’s Grasslands since 1945* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2018).



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